

8135. L. 5  
22

A  
CONVENTION  
THE  
ONLY MEANS  
OF  
SAVING US FROM RUIN.

IN A  
LETTER,  
ADDRESSED TO THE  
PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

By JOSEPH GERRALD.

If a long train of abuses, peculations, and artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the *people*, and they cannot but feel what they lie under, and see whither they are going; it is not to be wondered, that they should then rouse themselves, and endeavour to put the rule into such hands, which may secure to them the ends, for which Government was at first erected.

LOCKE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT. B. II. c. 19.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR D. I. EATON, NO. 74, NEWGATE-STREET.

M DCCXCIII.

CONVENTION  
THE  
ONLY MEANS  
OF  
SAVING US FROM RUIN.

LETTER  
ADDRESSED TO THE  
PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.  
BY JOSEPH PIERCE.



47  
10 9  
101



---

A

## CONVENTION, &c.

---

FRIENDS AND CITIZENS,

**W**AR is again broken out. From the Straights of Gibraltar to the bottom of the Baltic all Europe is involved in military operations. The plough is abandoned, and the loom stands still; fleets are equipped and armies levied, to disturb peaceful communities, and to lay waste the earth.

War, though declared by the government, must be supported by the people. Parliament imposes taxes, but *you* pay them. The King declares war, but it is the blood of the peasant and

B

the

the manufacturer which flows in the battle, it is the purse of the tradesman and artificer which is emptied in the contest.

If such are the awful and tremendous consequences of that state which now subsists between France and England, it is surely our duty, as good men and useful citizens, seriously to consider, what is the object for which we are fighting, and on what principle of justice we can engage in the conflict. If the life of one man is not to be taken away, but upon a principle of self-defence, or on the previous conviction of his guilt by a calm and sober appeal to reason, how much more does it become us, scrupulously to weigh, in *the balance of the sanctuary*, the causes for which we embark in a complicated war, in which the kindred-blood of thousands of our fellow creatures is poured out, like water, by the unfeeling arm of a mercenary soldiery, and millions must be squandered, which are wrung from the sweat of the brow of the husbandman.

*What have I to do with politics? Nothing.*  
From this important question, my countrymen, so weakly and wickedly answered, have arisen all the evils which have afflicted England through a long

long succession of ages. This is the fountain, from which not only waters of bitterness, but rivers of blood have flowed.—Did you ever doubt what connection you had with morals and virtue? And yet, what are politics, but that wide system of duties which nation owes to nation? Politics are to nations, what morals are to individuals. They have lately, indeed, been called the principal branch of morals. I think they are more. I hold them to be the great trunk of morals, on which all other duties depend but as branches. It is only upon a strict performance of these duties alone, that you can expect to be prosperous and happy as a people. Now as war can only be just on one side of the parties which carry it on, it must be murder on the other. The good or evil qualities of all actions depend not on the number or dignity of the agents, but on their tendency to promote the good of mankind. By this standard must equally be tried the actions of the peasant and the prince. In the guilt or innocence of the present war, as we all contribute to carry it on, either by personal service or the taxes which we pay, the declaration of war on the part of the King has deeply involved us. We are bound therefore, as moral and accountable agents, to examine the justice

of the measure; the means of information are at hand; and let me assure you, that where Knowledge is a duty, Ignorance is a crime. To the servile adulation of Court Sycophants on the one hand, or the clamorous howl of Opposition on the other, I pay little heed. Those juggling confederacies have too long and too successfully deluded the nation. Pitt succeeds North, Fox succeeds Pitt, and Pitt succeeds Fox again; but the national grievances remain unredressed, and the change of a minister produces nothing, but a transfer of pensions from one minion to another, and a fresh accumulation of national burthens. Parties are only a succession of birds of prey, of which the people are the banquet. Confide therefore in neither. The means of your security are in your own hands, and it remains for you alone to exert them. If your life were menaced by assault, would it not be ridiculous to apply to your neighbour to discharge your musket for you?

To put my mind at ease, I determined to sit down and examine coolly the grievances of the people, and the proper remedy to apply, without borrowing my opinion either from the advocates or defamers of Government. The result of that

exa-



examination is here submitted to you. In submitting it, however, I would wish to obviate an objection, to which this attempt may, at first, seem liable.

Some will censure it as indecent; for what can be more indecent, it may be said, than for a private man to pass judgment on the acts of the Legislature? In answer to the charge of indecency, I would ask, whether it be indecent to examine, or to reflect? Now the man who reflects at all, must either approve, or disapprove, or suspend his judgment. If he approves, it is because the thing approved of is conformable to his own ideas:—if he disapproves, it is because it is repugnant to his own ideas; if he keeps himself in suspense, it is because it is partly conformable, and partly repugnant. There appears to me to be no more indecency in one of these operations than in another. Of deceased Parliaments it was always allowed to speak freely. In Egypt, a despotic government, it was even ordained to examine and to censure the conduct of dead sovereigns; and the custom of pronouncing orations at the embalming of their kings, was established as the means of inciting their reigning prince to reform the errors, supply  
the

the defects, and accomplish the good designs of his predecessor.

In this country, which some are pleased to call *free*, though not pleased, we find, with the only means by which it can be kept so, though we may arraign the dead, we must flatter the living. We may disturb with impunity the ashes of our forefathers, but living evil has a claim to our respect. We are bound, it seems, to embrace the hands which buffet, and to kiss the feet that trample on us. The reverse of this conduct is undoubtedly proper. They who repose in the sanctuary of the grave, as they have ceased to injure, may be spared from reproach. But the living servants of the people, who make laws, by which not only property, but life itself may be forfeited, are certainly amenable to the tribunal of their employers; and when it is fair to examine, it may be proper to censure.

My motive for publishing is to do good—unconnected with any party; too proud to be dependent on any, I write but as I feel. Truth can only be offensive to him, whose conduct will not bear the test of examination.

In

In a word, if there are any persons in the legislature to whom this work may give offence, let them recollect, that being servants of the people, it is their duty to render an account of their conduct to that people from whom they derive their power, and for whose benefit alone they were entrusted with the exercise of it; let them recollect that punishment is not guilt, and that calumny is not infamy; that if to acquire truth is a blessing, to propagate it is a duty;---that the office of reason is to convince, and not to flatter, and, that the only effectual mode of making mankind speak good of them, is to do it.

#### FRIENDS AND CITIZENS,

*Hear now my reasonings, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.*---If we look back to the wars which have desolated Europe for these last hundred years, then these melancholy truths must strike even the most careless observer; that they might have been avoided by negociation, instead of being decided by arms; that they arose not from the jarring interests of the people, but from the ambition and avarice of courts, and, that at the end of each war, the situation of the people

was

was always much worse than at the beginning of it.

The war which preceded the peace of Ryf-wick was undertaken to make France acknowledge King William, and to recover Hudson's Bay.---How was this effected? After ten years fighting, (says Swift)† after the loss of a hundred thousand men, and a debt remaining of twenty millions, we at length listened to the terms of peace, which was concluded with great advantage to the Empire and Holland, but none at all to us. During that war, in consequence of large exports of corn to the continent, *to feed our Dutch and German allies*, in England it was double, and in Scotland four times its usual price, and in one of those years, in Scotland alone *eighty thousand poor people died of want*.‡ With respect to the first cause of the war, I cannot but observe, that wretched indeed must be the condition of that country where nine millions of inhabitants must be exposed to butchery and beggary, in order to procure a title for one man, upon whom, as upon

† Conduct of the Allies.

‡ Dalrymple's Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland, Part iii. book 3.



a mendicant; they conferred the crown of these realms, and an immense income, as alms, to support it. Ireland was made an Aceldama, a field of blood, fifty thousand brave men were driven into a foreign service, to turn their swords against the bosom of their parent country, and forfeited lands, which amounted in value to the enormous sum of *three millions three hundred thousand pounds*, were wrested from the native inhabitants, while their innocent posterity were deprived of their inheritances by that bitter and cruel relick of feudal tyranny, the law of forfeiture, made partakers in the sufferings, though they had never been partakers in the guilt of their forefathers. To what purposes was this immense property applied? To lighten the burden of taxes, or to prosecute the war? Far from it.—The Countess of Orkney, the strumpet of William, alone received a grant of three and twenty thousand pounds a year,† and the remainder was parcelled out among his Dutch minions and parasites, among the Van Keppels, the Nassaus, the Faleysteins, the Van Bentincks, and a countless tribe of court panders, whose barbarous appellations the tongues of Englishmen

† Macpherson's Hist. of Great-Britain, Vol. I.

could with difficulty pronounce. The spirit with which we engaged in that war, says Bolingbroke, was rash, presumptuous and ignorant, ill conducted at home, and ill seconded abroad. *But they who governed were glad to engage us at any rate.*‡

Forcible expressions ! and admirably adapted to describe the conduct of those who have precipitated us into the present mad and desperate contest.

The blood of the people had scarcely ceased to flow, when the short peace, which, in fact, was nothing more than a sullen pause from arms, was again disturbed upon causes equally futile, and for purposes equally destructive. James the Second dying at Saint Germain's, Lewis the Fourteenth, out of complaisance to his mistress, proclaimed his son King of England. Our wise ancestors, the Whigs of those days, of whose patriotism, as of the patriotism of the present Whigs, we hear so much and feel so little, generously mortgaged the revenues of their posterity to support the title of the disinterested Dutchman, and the nation again flew to arms. Voltaire|| informs us, that

‡ Letters on the State of Europe.

|| Siecle de Louis quatorze.

many eminent persons who lived at that period, assured him, that we should never have embarked in the war had it not been for the indignity offered to the king. The French monarch by the late peace had bound himself only, not to disturb King William *in his possession*, and as for the mere acknowledgment of the *title*, Lewis had as good cause to complain of William, as William had reason to complain of Lewis; for William had, formerly, been crowned King of France, though, it had never been resented by Lewis as a ground of hostility. Yet here again was a reason for spilling the blood, and draining the treasures, of those great nations. I need not be told, that this war was undertaken, to prevent the Spanish monarchy from passing into the house of Bourbon. In the first place, William had, by a letter under his own hand, acknowledged the Duke of Anjou, a French prince, and the grandson of Lewis, to be the lawful sovereign of Spain. The Dutch, who were *then*, as they are *now*, our very useful and active allies, had also recognized his title. Yet only six months had elapsed, (such is sometimes the faith of crowned heads!) when William formed alliances to dethrone the very prince, whom he had so recently acknowledged, and to support his com-

petitor with the blood of his subjects. What then was the pretext for the war? **TO GIVE A KING TO ANOTHER PEOPLE.** To interfere in the internal government of another country, in order to prevent the people from choosing, not only those whom they think proper to govern them, but also *in what manner the people shall be governed*, is a tyranny as insulting to their feelings, as it is destructive of their rights. The kingdom of Spain was to be parcelled out, not as the Spaniards themselves should think proper, but as it should suit the ambition or caprice of their neighbours. Spain was to be robbed of her territory, and to effect this felonious partition, did a King of England combine with an Emperor of Germany, and other continental despots. For this did he subsidize a King of Sardinia and other petty tyrants, who feed on the blood of the subjects, whom they let out for slaughter. This war, Friends and Citizens, is an awful, but, I hope, not useless example of the inefficacy of foreign force, to fix upon a great and respectable people, a *King* whom they abhor. Though our armies had been twice at Madrid, the capital of Spain, as Paris is of France, yet this temporary success served only more firmly to rivet the hatred of the



the Spaniards for the myrmidons who invaded them. "Armies," said Stanhope, who lived in those times, "may walk about that country till Doomsday, but they will walk about it without effect." The war terminated, as all similar wars, no doubt, will terminate, in an acknowledgment, on the part of the combined powers, of that very government, for which the natives had contended, and in the discomfiture and disgrace of the invading armies. But the evil ended not here. *One hundred and fifty thousand lives were sacrificed, and thirty millions of debt were added to our burthens.* "We hastily engaged in a war," says Swift,† "which cost us sixty millions, and, after repeated, as well as unexpected success in arms, has put us and our posterity in a worse condition, not only than any of our allies, but even than our conquered enemies themselves."—If such are the fruits of success, what must be the consequences of disaster!

Soon after the elevation of the house of Hanover to the throne of England, George the First purchased the two German duchies of Bre-

† Conduct of the Allies.

men and Verden. This purchase produced a Spanish war, exposed the country to all the horrors of an invasion from the brutal ferocity of Charles the Twelfth, and the restless machinations of Alberoni; and, even when the black cloud was dispelled, loaded the nation with the expence of sending a squadron, for six years, into the Baltic. In plain English, the King thought proper to purchase a German estate with a bad title, and the people of England were compelled to pay for it.

The Spanish war of 1739 was the next scene of blood in which we were involved. The object of this war was to procure a free navigation for English subjects in the American seas. In the year 1741, we were graciously favoured with the alliance of Austria, who was subsidized, as Sardinia is at present, to fight her own battles. In consequence of this measure, France was added to the number of our enemies. Like chivalrous knights, we engaged for the succour of that distressed damsel the Empress Queen of Hungary; and engaged with such a spirit of romantic folly† as to abandon the original object of the war,

† We are so declared in our opposition to French power, and so alert in defence of our allies, that they always reckon upon

war, the encrease and protection of our commerce, to preserve the dominions of the Elector of Hanover, and to fix the Imperial crown upon the head of a princess of the house of Austria. Thus the blood of British subjects was again poured out, to maintain the Pragmatic Sanction, to preserve the balance of power, and to enable us to talk that cabalistical jargon, which, while it assails the ears, neither informs the understanding, nor improves the condition of Englishmen. Balance of power, Fellow Citizens, means nothing more than to extend the dominions, and encrease the revenues of kings; for when did war meliorate the situation of the people? Like the ass in the fable between the two armies, they are suffered to crop the thistles for their food, and must not expect an alteration of the system, but a change of masters. At the conclusion of the war, they are transferred, like cattle, to the victorious freebooter, and are per-  
 upon our force, as upon their own; and, *expecting to carry on war at our expence*, refuse all reasonable terms of accommodation. All the world knows, that *the factious vote of the house of commons* in the beginning of the session, made the Queen of Hungary inflexible in her terms.

HUME'S ESSAYS, Vol. I.

mitted

mitted to graze upon the scanty pittance, which the ravages of war have left them.

But the *continent* of Europe was not the only theatre of human wretchedness. A civil war was excited in the heart of the kingdom, of which the flames were extinguished by copious torrents of the blood of Britons. The battle of Culloden, which fixed the house of Hanover on the throne of Great Britain, was only a prelude to scenes still more bloody and distressful. The Duke of Cumberland advanced with the army into the Highlands, and sent off detachments, on all hands, to hunt down the fugitives, and lay waste the country with fire and sword. The castles were plundered, or burned. Every house, hut, or habitation, met with the same fate, without distinction. All the cattle and provisions were carried off. The men were either shot upon the mountains, like wild beasts, or put to death in cold blood, without form of trial. The women, after having seen their husbands and fathers murdered, were subjected to brutal violation, and then turned out naked, with their children, to starve upon the barren heath. The ministers of vengeance were so alert in the execution of their office, that, in a few days, there

was



was neither house, cottage, man nor beast to be seen within the compass of fifty miles. All was ruin, silence, and desolation!

But though the sword of military execution was glutted with blood, other actors were to be introduced in the catastrophe of the piece, to drop the curtain upon the close of a tragedy, which those, *who in the track of death had slain men*, had merely begun. The scaffold reddened with the judicial slaughter of the victims of offended majesty; and the palpitating entrails of your fellow creatures were torn out, and exhibited to the eyes of Englishmen by the hands of the hangman, as a terror to disloyalty. Banishments, attainders, confiscations followed in the rear of corporal punishments, the innocent were confounded with the guilty, and the cup of calamity was filled up to the very brim. Such are the effects of those laws which some men call mild, and such the blessings of a contested succession!—

What then did England gain by this war? The right of English subjects to navigate in the American seas, without being subject to search, was not once mentioned in the treaty of peace, *though the claim was the original source of the dis-*

D

ferences

*ferences between Great Britain and Spain.* What did she lose? Much blood and treasure ; disgrace upon disgrace ; an additional load of grievous impositions ; and the national debt accumulated to the enormous sum of eighty millions.†

The war which followed began in 1756. A dispute concerning a tract of land on the back parts of America, was the spark which lighted up the flame of contention. The charge of encroachment was preferred on our part against the French, and as firmly retaliated by them. To criminate and recriminate has never been the road to reconciliation ; nor was it so on this occasion. Had the parties interested alone been consulted, a jury of twelve men might have decided the contest. But unhappily for mankind, deliberate reasoning has never been the weapon of Kings. They are great logicians, who reason only by the stroke of the sabre. It would be tedious and disgusting, Fellow Citizens, to enter again upon an accurate enumeration of all those calamities which successively desolated the four quarters of the globe, and which, though they began on the lakes of Canada, were extended to

• Smollett's Cont. Hist. Engl. vol. 3.

the banks of the Ganges. In the single expedition to the Havannah, of the fourteen thousand land forces who assembled at the beginning of the siege, only seven hundred and fifty were able to do duty upon the reduction of the citadel.\* In Europe, the very elements, as if indignant of the cruel ravages of man, seemed to conspire to punish his wickedness. A winter, remarkable for its severity, succeeded the bloody campaign of 1759. In Germany, which has long been the slaughter-house of Europe, the cold was insupportable. Reaumur's thermometer sunk to 15. Birds dropped dead in their flight. In many places the centinels were frozen to death. An infectious disease, which began in the armies, diffused itself among the inhabitants, and made a dreadful havock. A pestilential contagion raged among the cattle. Famine was soon added to the rest of their calamities; and thus every misery which can afflict mankind was poured out *from the vials of wrath* with the most liberal measure. There was no prospect of an alleviation of their distresses. On the contrary, the sufferings of the *people* only whetted the appetite of *Kings* for war; and out of the general want a resource arose to their

† Mante's History of the War.

armies, which were the more readily recruited, because the scanty pay and subsistence of a soldier became an object of envy to the unfortunate peasantry; and death seemed more honourable and less certain by the sword than by penury and disease †.

War then, you perceive, Fellow Citizens, is only a frightful enumeration of massacres, assassinations, proscriptions, and devastation; and the mild and gentle methods by which we in Europe make a boast to conduct it, are nothing more than an improvement in the mystery of murder. I shall therefore hasten to shut up the scene, and I do it the more willingly, as the epithets of brilliant and glorious, terms which cast a false and flattering lustre round the great scourges of mankind, have been unsparingly applied to the war, of which I am speaking. We began a dispute about a few waste tracts of land in a distant part of the world, and we concluded it, by losing the lives of two hundred and fifty thousand of our fellow creatures, and incurring an additional debt of fifty millions.

We next come to that eventful war which separated the continent of America from Great

† Annual Register.

Britain,



Britain, and convulsed every part of the empire to its deepest foundations. All war, indeed, is calamitous, but the American war was marked with circumstances of horror peculiar and distinguishing. During the three first years of that nefarious and execrable war, nothing was offered to America but SLAVERY or DEATH. *Unconditional submission* was the language openly avowed by the Ministers of the Crown; and the minds of the most moderate were inflamed by claims of legislative authority, at once detestable for their tyranny, and contemptible for their weakness. A right to bind the Americans, *in all cases whatever*, was asserted by Parliament, in which they had not a single representative. I have called it contemptible for its weakness; for, in truth, it resembled the unmeaning rhodomantade of ambassadors, who stile their masters Kings of *France* or *Jerusalem*; and, as these titles do not secure a foot of land, so the declaratory act did not secure an atom of authority. It was a barren year which cast a noxious shade over that fair portion of the globe.

To accomplish these objects, however, the trade of death was again commenced. For three years victory hung in suspense, and the British  
army

army, during that period, alternately possessed and abandoned Boston, New York, Philadelphia; as in France, we have seen the Duke of Brunswick taking their fortified towns, and soon after expelled from them with ignominy and defeat. The mercenary circles of Germany were ransacked to dragoon America into unconditional submission; domestic insurrections were excited among slaves, whose price of freedom was the murder of their masters; and even the merciless Indian savages were brought down upon their defenceless frontiers, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguishing massacre of all ages, sexes and conditions. Wherever these barbarians marched their route was marked with blood. The destruction of the fine, new, and flourishing settlement of Wyoming forms a protruding feature in this groupe of horrors, and therefore merits a particular detail. The district consisted of eight townships, each containing a square of five miles, beautifully situated on both sides of the Susquehannah. It was blest with a climate bland as the *dews of heaven*, and a soil luxuriantly fertile.

In this Eden of the new world, where every man possessed an abundance, which was the fruit

of moderate labour and industry ; where no man was very rich, nor very great ; the inhabitants exhibited such a picture of primeval happiness as has seldom been equalled ; and such, indeed, as humanity, in its present state, seems scarcely capable of exceeding.

But neither the happiness of the climate, the fertility of the soil, nor the remoteness of the situation, could preserve the tranquillity of that happy spot. The demon of discord blew his horn among their habitations ; and the settlers, who were denominated *the friends of government*, holding a secret correspondence with the Indians, stung the bosom of that confidence on which they were unsuspectingly suffered to repose, and cancelled every law of nature and humanity.

The mask was soon thrown off. They now appeared openly in arms ; and while they assumed the dress, they adopted the practices, of the savages. Having massacred the men stationed to defend one fort, which guarded the district, they proceeded to the next ; and, to cheer the drooping spirits of the weak remaining garrison, sent in, for their contemplation, the bloody scalps of two hundred of their late relations, friends,  
and

and comrades. Colonel Dennison, the commander of the fort, seeing the impossibility of any effectual defence, went with a flag to Butler, the General of the combined army of savages and *friends of Government*, to know what terms he would grant on a surrender; to this application of weakness and misery, Butler, with all the phlegm of a real savage, abruptly answered, "the hatchet." In these dreadful circumstances, the unfortunate Governor having defended his fort, until most of the garrison were killed or disabled, was at length compelled to surrender at discretion. Some of the unhappy persons in the fort were carried away alive; but the barbarous conquerors, to save the trouble of murder in detail, shut up the greater part promiscuously in the houses and barracks, which having set on fire, they enjoyed the savage pleasure of beholding the whole consumed in one general blaze.

They then proceeded to the only remaining fort, called Wilkesborough, which, in hopes of obtaining mercy, was surrendered without resistance, or without even demanding any conditions. Here the tragedy was renewed with aggravated horrors. In this fortress were shut up the militia of the district. With these, as objects of parti-



particular enmity, the slaughter was begun; and they were butchered with every possible circumstance of the most deliberate and wanton cruelty. The remainder of the men, with the women and children, not demanding so much particular attention, were shut up as before, in the houses, which being set on fire, they perished all together in the flames.

A general scene of devastation was now spread through all the townships. Fire, sword, and the other instruments of destruction alternately triumphed. The corn fields were set on fire, and the standing corn, now almost ready for the sickle, burnt as it grew. The houses, furniture, valuables of every kind, together with all those improvements which owed their rise to the persevering toil, and patient industry of man, were as completely destroyed as their nature, or the activity of the spoilers would admit.—It has been often observed, Fellow Citizens, that the practice and habit of cruelty, with respect to any particular object, begets a facility in its execution, and a disposition to its commission with regard to all others. Thus these merciless ravagers, when the main objects of their cruelty were exhausted, seemed to direct their animosity to every part of

E

living

living nature ; and, as if it were a relaxation or amusement, cut out the tongues of the horses and cattle, leaving them still alive only to prolong their agonies.

Modes of inventive cruelty were also adopted, which must alternately freeze every breast with horror, and melt it with compassion. A captain Bedlock, who had been taken prisoner, being stript naked, had his body stuck full of thash pine splinters, and then a heap of knots of the same wood being stuck round him, the whole was set on fire, and his two companions, the captains Ranson and Durgee, thrown alive into the flames. *The friends of Government*, who had, at different times, abandoned the settlement in order to join in these savage expeditions, were the most distinguished for their cruelty. Among these, one, whose mother had married a second husband, butchered with his own hands, both her, his father-in-law, his own sisters and their infant children. Another, who, during his absence, had sent home several threats against the life of his father, now, not only realized them in person, but was himself, with his own hands, the exterminator of his whole family ; mother, brothers and sisters, mingled their blood in one common carnage with that

that of the ancient husband and father. The Indians, whose thirst of blood was rather whetted than satiated, continued to pursue the fugitives (consisting mostly of women and children), the miserable relicks of those who had fallen in their habitations. Destruction was every where let loose upon them, and met the hunted victims at every turn. Shivering with cold, appalled with fear, and surrounded with the shades of night, they wandered in the forests, as chance directed them, without guide, and without communication. Several women were delivered alone in the woods, at a great distance from every possibility of relief. The thread of infant life was no sooner spun than it was cut short; while many of the tender and feeble sex, unable to sustain the complicated ills of pain, cold, and disease, perished †.

Humanity would induce us to throw a veil over fights so hideous and deformed, did not a sense of duty, with a view to prevent their repetition, instigate us to afford a faithful recital of enormities which degrade human nature beneath the beasts that perish!

† Annual Register.

The defeat and capture of Burgoyne's army, however, gave a new turn to affairs. It inspired the leaders in America with confidence; and the faces which appeared in the new Congress, caused the countenance of the Court to droop. Foreign alliances were now formed, while the state-house of independent Philadelphia opened its doors to the ambassador of France. Spain and Holland soon after acceded to the confederacy, and the calamities of war were multiplied in every quarter.

The people of Britain were, at length, stunned with their senses by the heavy blows of national calamity. An embassy of persons, some of whom had held the haughty language of unconditional submission, were sent, at an immense expence, across the Atlantic, to lay the boasted honour, dignity, and supremacy of the British Parliament, at the feet of that very vagrant Congress, whom the wretched hirelings of an abandoned Administration, had once loaded with every term of abuse; in the same manner as the pensioned scribblers of the present day, calumniate that band of inflexible patriots, the Convention of France. As force had proved ineffectual, corruption, that hacknied engine of Courts, was now resorted to as an expedient; but the same republican virtue  
which



which had bravely resisted the arms of England, refused to be bribed by her gold.

The Americans had tasted the sweets of independence, and refused to accept that freedom as a boon, which they had firmly established as a right. Grown furious with disappointment, the Commissioners now threatened the extremes of war (which, as we have seen, had been substantially practised), and to establish perpetual desolation in a country, which we had neither the wisdom to retain, nor the power to subdue. This menace produced no other effect, than the indignation of those against whom it was directed, and more active exertions to repel hostilities, which were now imbibed by the rage of disappointment; while the baffled missionaries of an intriguing junto, covered with disgrace, were compelled to abandon the nefarious project of corrupting a people who had bravely resolved to be free and independent.

After a succession of four years of bloody and wasteful defeats, or useless victories, Great Britain was forced to grant to the arms of America what she had haughtily refused to her prayers. Their independence was formally, though reluctantly,

antly, acknowledged, *the object of the war abandoned*, and peace restored, to a distracted people, though with the loss of two hundred thousand lives, and with an increase of the national debt to the gigantic sum of *two hundred and seventy nine millions six hundred and ninety-eight thousand pounds!*

An æra of quiet and happiness now succeeded, these scenes of desolation. If even the fruits of victory are bitter and afflicting, how much was it to be expected, that England would have learned wisdom by disgrace and defeat, and that pacific councils would have distinguished the close of a reign, which had hitherto been clouded by domestic distractions, and ruinous war. But the repose of Europe was now to be disturbed by an event as extraordinary, as it was unexpected. France, who, for many centuries, had groaned under a rigorous and unremitting tyranny, was about to break her chains on the heads of her oppressors, and to exhibit an awful and magnificent scene to an astonished world. A series of brilliant and important events, which followed each other in rapid succession, and which emancipated that country from the feudal tyranny of the nobles, and the supercilious imposture of the priesthood,

hood, are too fresh in the minds of all men, to stand in need of repetition.

France started from the dead repose of despotism, like another Lazarus from the tomb, and glowed with animated life, and invigorating freedom. It was then that the herd of vermin courtiers, who had long abused the credulity, and rioted upon the spoils of the people, no longer able to burrow themselves under the throne, fled dismayed from that justice which they had long, with impunity, been permitted to violate. A constitution was now formed, composed indeed of discordant materials, but which *seemed* calculated to guard the rights of the people from future encroachments of the Crown. But men accustomed to boundless and uncontrolled sway, are not easily brought to regulate their conduct by the simple rules of reason and of justice. At no long period from his acceptance of the constitution, the King of the French, attended by his whole family, made an effort to escape, and to join those abandoned parricides, who had filled all Europe with their calumnies and lamentations, and whose wily intrigues were at that very period exciting foreign powers to embroil their hands in the blood of their native country. He left

left behind, indeed, a justifying memorial stating, that the engagements into which he had recently entered with his people, as they had been extorted by compulsion, could have neither the force, nor the obligation of a law, and scrupled not to avow (perfidious impostor!) that he should deem himself justified in violating that constitution, which, in the face of heaven and earth, he had sworn to preserve.

By the vigilance and fidelity of the people, the project proved abortive. He was arrested in his flight, and brought back to his capital, escorted by the people, whose ill-placed affection for their monarch, repressed that indignation which his detected duplicity might justly have excited. Upon his entry into Paris not a single reproach was hurled, not a single murmur was breathed from the lips of the spectators. What punishment, Fellow Citizens, do you think was inflicted upon him, for this breach of good faith, of which the object was to annihilate the liberties of his country? None. He was conducted to his palace, re-invested with the authority which he had shamefully abandoned, and enabled to support the dignity of a King, by the liberal donation from his abused people, of a yearly income of one million,



million two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. If the mind of Lewis had been susceptible of virtue, a conduct so generous, on the part of his people, and so unmerited on his own, would have rivetted him for ever to the real interests of France. But the soil was too barren to admit of culture,

Confidence among men is of a nature so delicate, that when once it is violated, it is seldom restored; nor was the conduct of Lewis calculated to regain it. Part of that income, which the poorest peasant contributed to pay, was squandered in administering to the lazy pomp and destructive projects of those exiled brothers, who were then openly in arms against his own subjects; and, whose wasteful prodigalities had impoverished the revenues, while their profligate vices had corrupted the morals of their country. Lewis was detected in a secret and treasonable correspondence with the avowed enemies of the French nation. But there is a limit to credulity as well as to oppression. The people of the capital, joined by numbers from the provinces roused by a sense of their reiterated wrongs, rose as in one mass, and flew to arms. The events which distinguished the tenth of August are too

well known to require a recital. The King fled trembling for protection into the arms of that assembly, whose ruin he had plotted, and whose confidence he had abused. The temple of Royalty was now explored, and the idol, before which France had servilely bowed down, was broken into pieces. The ever-memorable decree of the twenty-first of September, completed the work which the tenth of August had begun. The abolition of Royalty was, on that day, pronounced by the unanimous voice of the Representatives of the French nation, the fabric of tyranny was overthrown from its foundations, and the Genius of Freedom stood triumphant on its ruins.

The Court of England, which had hitherto kept a haughty reserve, and even a fullen silence, with respect to the affairs of France, now began to disclose its temper and dispositions. Her ambassador at Paris presented a memorial, in which the French were threatened, with the lively resentment of his royal master, in case the sacred person of the perjured Lewis should be made responsible for crimes which he had either meditated or committed. An insolent and imperious mandate was issued to a free and respectable nation, to stop the progress of justice, and give impunity

punity to crimes. Inferior traitors might perish unheeded, but the great state criminal, whose guilt was enhanced by every argument which was urged for his vindication, was declared not amenable to any earthly judicature. France, however, disdained to submit to the dictates of any foreign crowned head ; and firmly resolved, that as Lewis was responsible only to God for his conduct, if the proofs of his guilt should be solidly established, to send him to that tribunal to which alone he could appeal. He was arraigned at the bar of the Representatives of the nation, and, upon full and unequivocal evidence, was convicted of having kept foreign troops in his pay, which a decree of the Assembly had formerly disbanded, and of having transmitted large sums of the public money to pay the forces of his brothers, who were in arms against their country. This conviction only took place after a long and patient investigation of these charges, which he was enabled to repel by the aid of counsel, distinguished for their eloquence, their integrity, and acuteness. By a solemn decree of the Convention he was pronounced **GUILTY OF HAVING ATTEMPTED TO SUBVERT THE LIBERTIES OF THE PEOPLE**, and adjudged to a public and exemplary death. The sentence was

executed with the deepest formality, and an instructive lesson was conveyed to the tyrants of the earth, by an event the most awful, that ever was exhibited on the blood-stained theatre of human actions.

By the death of Lewis, a pretext, which had been long and eagerly sought, was furnished to the court of London to commence hostilities against France. The establishment of a government erected on the broad basis of freedom and *an equality of rights*, could not fail to appal the trembling and guilty heart of a minister, whose sole object of rule, had been the aggrandizement of his connections, and the gratification of his ambition, and whose narrow and juggling system had been uniformly supported by the feeble props of yearly expedients and daily tricks, by the widest diffusion of the principles of corruption, by a dark, intricate, and wicked mystery of stock-jobbing. Had he been sincere in his attempts to save the life of Lewis, his conduct would have been precisely the reverse of what it was. He would have trampled upon the rules of diplomatic formality, when they militated with the principles of policy and of justice, and, instead of recalling his ambassador at the crisis of Capet's fate, would

have



have enlarged his powers, and multiplied his instructions.

Had his vanity permitted him, to have sought in precedent a justification of his conduct, he would have easily found, in the history of his own country, the object of his research. Upon the condemnation of Charles Stuart, King of England, Cardinal Mazarine, minister of France, and the States of Holland, gave instructions to their ambassadors in London, to exert their efforts to save the life of that monarch. They held not the haughty language of irritation, which must have inevitably tended to hasten his fate ; although the high court of justice, which condemned Charles, had been partially selected, while the convention who tried Lewis, were composed of men delegated by the united voice of all France. The perfect acquiescence of the people in the decision of their representatives gave to it the authoritative stamp of popular approbation. Humane men, therefore, who wished to save the life of Lewis, shuddered at the conduct of the minister of England, which was so evidently destructive of its avowed purpose ; wise men saw, with a just contempt, through the flimsy veil which was spread over his intentions, and bold men scrupled not to predict  
and

and to affirm, that an affected sympathy for the dead, would be used as a pretext to shed the blood of the living.

The arguments urged by the zealots of despotism, are such as, if well founded, must lay the liberties of mankind for ever in the dust. If treason against the constitution, according to the opinion of Lord Somers, be the first species of that crime, the guilt of Lewis is greater than the guilt of the mere assassin of a king, in the same proportion, as the welfare of a whole people is an object of more regard, than the life of an individual. In France, power without responsibility was deemed a monster in the moral world. The institution of a king is plainly conditional. He may forfeit his right to allegiance, as undeniably and effectually, as the subject may forfeit his right to protection. These arguments then, can in no case be admitted by the disciples of reason, or the sons of freedom; and in the case of Lewis, in particular, had a direct tendency, to justify perfidy, to sanctify perjury, to remove the sacred boundaries of right and wrong, to call good evil, and evil good.

As no war is justifiable but that which is undertaken on a principle of self-defence, the advocates

cates for the present war, rest their cause upon the previous declaration on the part of France. Let us now calmly examine the grounds of this complaint, and we trust that we shall prove, that the motive which has actuated the conduct of the English ministry is neither injuries received, nor rights invaded, but a spirit of depredation on the commerce of France, which invited the hand of rapine, as it was supposed to be unprotected; that the motive which has actuated the conduct of our allies, is a spirit of conquest, and barefaced usurpation, and that the motive which has actuated the conduct of all parties is an eagerness to interfere in the internal government of France, which strikes at the root of her independence as a nation.

The condemnation of Pitt may be reduced to the proof of two simple, and almost self-evident propositions—

First, that a profound, permanent, and sincere peace subsisted between the two nations, when France thought proper to change the form and system of her government.—Second, that the hostile mind existing in the executive government of a nation, manifested by facts too notorious to be

be denied, and too clear to be misunderstood, constitutes an infraction of the peace ; and being therefore an act of aggression, justifies not only the declaration of war, but the hostilities of the power on whom it was committed.

These truths are incontestible, and must be acknowledged by every unprejudiced and disinterested man. Until the suspension of the king from the functions of royalty, which happened on the 10th of August, England professed towards France, a pacific disposition, and was prodigal of her assurances of a strict neutrality, if not of a sincere friendship. Her ambassador was then recalled, upon the futile pretext, that his credentials were simply to repair to the King of the French.

Had Pitt been as sincere in his intentions, as he was loud in his declarations of preserving peace, new credentials might have been issued, and a good understanding might still have subsisted between the two countries. But the proceedings of the British cabinet were a tissue of contradictions. Dundas, the Secretary of State, declared, that it was not the intention of his court to interfere in the internal government of France, while the recall of Lord Gower, at that very period, which



which was a strong, though tacit disapprobation of her government, gave the lie to his assertion. At that moment, the minister concealed a secret war, under the appearance of peace ; and eagerly seized the hour of public distraction to inflict upon France, the wound of hostility, to a greater depth, and with fuller security. France, on the other hand, sought to preserve the friendship of a nation, whom she could respect without fearing ; and to maintain peace, though she dreaded not war. Had a similar spirit influenced the councils of Pitt, the public repose would not now have been disturbed ; for, it is surely his duty to prove not only injuries received, but redress demanded and refused. Professions of moderation are frequently the cover of a boundless ambition ; and it is from the actions of ministers alone, that understanding and disinterested men will ultimately decide upon the motives of their conduct, and the sentiments of their hearts.

But the government of France had given the most unequivocal proof of her pacific disposition. Her enmity to surrounding nations was buried in the sepulchre of monarchy. Peace was interwoven in the very texture of her constitution. She had proscribed all war of offence by an ex-

press declaration; and though it may be said, that no civilized nation ever yet avowed itself the aggressor in war, yet such a declaration on the part of the government, must be considered as the harbinger of peace, as it tends to render offensive wars odious to the people, and to infuse, into their minds, a moral principle for the regulation of their conduct.

Upon the resurrection of peace among the nations of the earth, France was the first to throw away her shroud. Is it not, therefore, Fellow Citizens, a fact as singular as it is melancholy, that the only nation within the great circle of the globe, which has had the boldness to *denounce* all war, except such as is undertaken on a principle of preservation, should see arrayed for her destruction, those bands of mercenaries, the standing armies of Europe, and should be branded as the systematic disturber of that repose, to which it had repeated the most lively and solemn assurances. Of such a conduct what shall we think, but that courts have an interest in deceiving the people, whom they pretend to instruct, that open injustice cannot even be spared the reproaches of perfidy and dissimulation, and that they attribute those motives to the actions of others, which they  
are

are conscious, have so powerfully influenced their own.

But though France had been deaf to the claims of justice, it is not probable, that assailed as she was by the arms of the two most warlike nations on the continent, and by an envenomed faction in her own bosom, she would wantonly have encreased the number of her enemies, by violence and aggression. On this occasion, a regard for her very existence was a warrant for her moderation; nor could she have violated the principles which she professed, without being mad even past the cure of hellebore, and self-devoted to destruction.

The declaration of war, on the part of France, has been frequently mentioned, by the friends of the minister, as a ground of his justification. But these ceremonies, it has been well observed, are merely the heralds, which announce the terrible exchange of peace for war, and are only the measures that nations have reciprocally agreed on to avoid treachery and surprise. France, as unwilling to sustain injustice, as she was indisposed to do it, exhibited, by this act, an instance of her sincerity, as well as of her firmness; and though

the was not the first to strike, would not be the last to suffer.

But France, it has been asserted, by her decree of the 19th of November attempted to erect the standard of revolt in every country throughout Europe; and, that by her invasion of Holland and her correspondence with certain societies in England, she openly executed what her decree had formerly avowed. If the opening of the Scheldt, at the express request of the inhabitants of the Low Countries, through whose territories it flows, as the Thames does through yours; if that measure, I say, be construed as a breach of treaty, it should also be recollected, that treaties, extorted by force and a baneful spirit of monopoly, are deficient in that principle, which alone can render them sacred and binding; and, that when the same measure was adopted by the Emperor in the year 1785, England did not manifest the slightest intention to prevent its taking place: a contradiction, which cannot be reconciled at the bar of reason, unless we suppose (a supposition which the melancholy fate of divided Poland sufficiently justifies) that the generous interference of free states to dispense the blessings which they enjoy, excites and justifies the interference of crowned



crowned heads; while the insolent and rapacious ambition of despots may seize the dominions of a defenceless neighbour, and commit, with impunity, an act of injustice, which shall be secretly connived at, if not openly supported, by every Court in Europe.

But Holland sought not the interference of England, and, if we may judge from the conduct which she held, was rather willing to compromise the dispute by negotiation, than to decide it by arms; and England herself can, with ill grace, complain of the conduct of France, since, in the year 1786, she united her arms with the despotic power of Prussia, and, with a shameful effrontery, interfered in the domestic distractions of Holland, to erect the tyranny of the Stadtholder upon the ruins of the freedom, and in opposition to the wishes, of the people.

The addresses of certain free societies in England, to congratulate France on the establishment of her liberties, have been another pretext for this war of the minister. But if the voice of reason be suffered to prevail over the fears of despotism (too successfully employed in exciting those dangers which she affects to dread), humanity must

must rejoice at every proceeding, which, by producing an extinction of national antipathies, will establish *peace on earth and good-will towards all men*. It is rather remarkable, that England should have made these addresses a ground of complaint, when the Court of Saint James's, since the beginning of the Revolution, and the destruction of the Bastille, had been the open asylum of those traitors and emigrants, whom France had expelled from her bosom as the disturbers of her repose.

The despotic court of Versailles had long been considered as the arsenal, from which issued those thunders which disturbed the peace, and oppressed the liberties of Europe; and this baneful system had been attributed, by our ministers, to the nature of her government. Strange then must it appear to you, my Countrymen, that as soon as despotism was extinguished in France, and the *accursed thing removed from the camp*, England should have showed an alacrity to adopt a system, which, for more than a century, she had loudly condemned, and which France had renounced in the eyes of all Europe. But the period, we trust, is hastily approaching, when the

the spell of political enchantment will be dissolved, when mankind, no longer blinded by prejudice or passion, will cease to be the victims of bloody projectors, will regard the interest of their neighbour as inseparable from their own, and will clasp, within the circle of universal benevolence, the brotherhood of the human race.

If England really enjoys the freedom of which she boasts, she has nothing to dread from the addresses of societies to nations who, like France, are struggling to be free; but should rather encourage that freedom of discussion which must cherish at home the *sacred flame*, and strengthen the fundamental principle of her government.

I shall now say a few words, Fellow Citizens; first, upon the justice of the war, and the object which it pursues, and afterwards upon its policy and probability of success.

The conquest of France has been formerly disavowed by Pitt, and though little dependence is to be placed upon the lying lips of that miserable Quixote, whose whole life has been one uniform series of projects wickedly planned and weakly

exc-

executed †, of assertions pompously made and ignominiously retracted, of reforms factiously proposed and treacherously abandoned; though the political mountebank has so often shifted the ground of his stage, until, at last, he has no ground to stand upon, yet such is the evident impracticability of conquest, that I shall not attribute even to Pitt himself, what the moonstruck knight of Cervantes, in the maddening hour of imaginary conquest, would scarcely have projected. But, if it is not a war of conquest, it is at least a war of partition; and, in conjunction with the despots of the continent, we are attempting to dismember France, and are acting, towards that Republic, the very part, which, with hypocritical grimace, we deprecate as to Poland.

I call upon Pitt, as he shall answer upon that black and bitter day of retribution, which is now hovering over his guilty head;—I call upon him, in the name of the people of England, whose blood he is shedding, whose treasures he is lavishing, to know whether Frederick Duke of

† Witness his Nootka Sound negotiation, concerning cat-fish, which cost the people three millions of money, and his intended war against the Empress of Russia, whose husband died a sudden death, but who is now our good ally.



York, the commander in chief of the British forces, did not take possession of Valenciennes in the name of the Emperor of Germany ; and, if the troops of that despot are not now in possession of that fortress ?—I call upon him to answer, whether our good allies, the Austrians are not also in possession of Conde and Quesnoy, two towns which likewise belong to the Republic of France, and which have been delivered up to those mercenaries without the smallest stipulation on our part, that when peace arrives, they shall be restored to the son of the unfortunate Capet ; whose interests Pitt affects to cherish, and whose fate he hypocritically bewails, while he is marking out his person as an object of vengeance to the whole French nation, by the adoption of measures, which, as the eloquent Sheridan has well expressed it, are whetting the axe which hangs over the head of that unfortunate infant. I call upon him to answer to the people of England, whose ill-placed confidence once raised him to that station, which he has too long filled and dishonoured, whether the town of Dunkirk was not summoned by the Duke of York, not for Lewis the Seventeenth, but for his father, George the Third, King of England. The *avowed* object of the war has been long since accomplished ; the expul-

sion of the French from Holland and Brabant, and the happy moment of concluding a peace, has passed away. The minister of England *now* avows, as we have lately seen by an article of our treaty with the king of Prussia, that we are fighting to *impose a government upon France*. Of what nature, I would ask you, Fellow Citizens, do you think is the government proposed? Not a free government, not even that incongruous constitution of 1789, in which a partial representation of the people was joined with an hereditary monarch, endowed with an income so immense, as to be able, by *influencing*, or, in other words, by bribing the deputies, (a custom not altogether peculiar to France) to defeat the great end of representative government.

Now mark, with attention, the contradictions which have taken place. The prince of Saxe-Cobourg, upon the reduction of Conde, publishes a proclamation, in which he offers to France, the constitution of 1789. A congress composed of the representatives of all the combined powers who were then sitting at Antwerp, recall his declaration, cancel his word, and declare that he had exceeded the limits of his authority. The Duke of York, the son and representative of the King

King of England, who is a member of that congress, is a party to the declaration, and becomes thereby an instrument of disgrace to his superior officer, and of a violation of good faith to the people of France. In the mean time, that the consistency of Pitt might keep pace with his integrity in beginning the war, and his wisdom in conducting it, Lord Hood is sent into the Mediterranean, with a fleet, (I will not say to lie idle, for his lordship is an active citizen, and having been, three times, a candidate for the incorrupt city of Westminster, well knows, that there are other means of convincing mankind besides blows or rhetoric), and the town of Toulon is taken by the gentle means of negotiation; to be held in trust for Lewis the Seventeenth, by a motley groupe of British, Spanish, Piedmontese, and Neapolitan troops, the greater part of whom are the subjects of governments well known for their attachment to the civil and religious liberties of mankind.

Our depredations in the north of France, then, it seems, are to be compensated by our generosity in the south. But the conquest of kings produce only an accumulation of burdens upon the people. While the ruined merchant and manu-

facturer are perishing in your gaols, a numerous tribe of court dependants, (a race of men now known in France only by a recollection of their iniquities) and a commissioner at their head, with a salary of five thousand pounds a year, are sent to Toulon, though declared in a state of siege, *to cry peace when there is no peace.*

The injustice of the war has been incontestibly proved by the facts which I have enumerated. We pretend to assert the rights of the son of Lewis Capet, and we assist the Austrians in robbing him of his dominions. We exclaim against the convention as an assembly of tyrants, and we send into France to rid her of her tyranny, those zealous dispensers of the blessings of freedom, the dragoons of Saxe Cobourg and the hussars of Esterhazy.

I shall now address a few words to a certain description of men, who, to the disgrace of this country, I am afraid are not few, upon the policy of the war, and its probability of success; men who, regardless of the principle of the war, look only to the issue of it, to whom disaster alone is guilt, and with whom success, however founded, like Abraham's faith, will hold the place of righteousness.

If



If our object is peace, the mode of obtaining it, is not to outrage the feelings of those with whom we are at war. Since the general reception, which the constitution of France has received among her citizens, it cannot be doubted, but that it is the creature of the people, and, that actuated as they are by the most ardent enthusiasm, they will support it though assailed by that tempest of war, which the demon of despotism has conjured up for its destruction. Wise men are always practicable men. As the *avowed* object of the war, therefore, is not the extirpation of the whole nation, some respect should be paid, not only to the principles, but to the prejudices which influence them. That constitution, which they regard as the wisest and the best, has, by the hundred and twenty-first article, expressly declared, "that France will not make peace with an enemy that occupies its territory." To inflame their resentments by destructive hostility, or corrupt artifice, is not the way to dispose them to amity and reconciliation. Those, who began the war, have not only drawn the sword, but have thrown away the scabbard. In many parts of that once flourishing country, we have seen war stripped of all that "pomp, pride, and circumstance," which so strongly fascinates

fascinates the imagination. It has been divested of that glare of glory which so often throws a shade over its deformities, and the ghastly carcase has not only been exposed in all its nakedness, but polluted and distained by the bloody hands of barbarians †. In the midst, however, of

† The following is an authentic account of the cruelties exercised by the Austrians and emigrants, which was communicated to a friend of mine, by an English officer of untainted veracity, who was at Liege when those cruelties were perpetrated.

“ The Austrians continued to pour into Liege a prodigious quantity of shells and red-hot balls for many hours after it was evacuated by the French, whereby a number of citizens were killed, and many houses destroyed; after which a part of the troops entered the city, and the most horrid spectacle presented itself that ever eyes beheld. Men, women, and children, every human creature that they met was indiscriminately butchered. The houses were broken open, and the shops plundered. The women were first violated, and afterwards murdered. Two streets in particular, la rue de St. Nicolas, and rue St. Anne, experienced all the fury of the soldiers, nor did the officers show more moderation or humanity than the common men. La rue St. Nicolas is a waste of ruins, and its inhabitants are destroyed. Some of those belonging to the rue St. Anne, escaped with their lives; but the number of men, women, and children killed, after the enemy had left the city, is estimated at six or seven thousand.

The

of all the cruelties, terror, and desolation, which follow your arms, *for before them is as the garden*

The subsequent account is a literal translation from the address delivered at the bar of the national convention, on the 29th of September, 1792, by citizen Robert, Mayor of Vancq, attended by Benier, Recorder of that Community.

“ Representatives of the French people ; I address you  
“ in the name of seven or eight hundred citizens, to whom  
“ nothing remains but the ashes of their habitations and  
“ their fidelity to the republic, and who, for their attachment to the laws of their country, have experienced the  
“ vengeance of the enemies of liberty.

“ On Monday the 24th of this month (September) the  
“ Municipality of Vancq, in the district of Vouvrières, and  
“ department of Ardennes, received an order in the name  
“ of the ci-devant Marechal de Broglio, commanding a body of emigrants, whose head quarters were then at Vouvrières, to supply his army with provisions ; which being  
“ refused by the Municipality, fire was set to the village,  
“ and in a moment the blaze consumed our whole crop,  
“ both of wheat and barley, with our barns, stables, horses,  
“ and nearly two hundred houses, with the church, were  
“ also destroyed. Their rage was not yet satisfied. They  
“ massacred without distinction, old men, women and children : they prevented a mother from entering her dwelling, to  
“ save her three infants, who perished in the flames.

“ They offered a pardon to any person who would deliver up myself and the rector ; but by a road unknown to them,  
“ we found means to escape. The emigrants satiated with

“ car-

*of Eden, and behind them as the desolate wilderness,* the spirit of France remains unsubdued. Two bloody and expensive campaigns are now almost closed, and not one single department has sought your aid to establish for them a government. The extent of your empire, (as was well said, during the American war,) and of your cantonments, is the same. Whatever you command, you command by the mouth of the cannon, but you command no more.

The object of the war is not only changed, but the nature of the enemies, with whom you have to fight. Over the fleet and armies of the tyrants of France, the people of Great Britain have repeatedly triumphed. Recollect, however, that it is not upon the satellites of despotism, but upon the whole French nation, that you are now making war. France is no longer a den of tyrants, and a dungeon of slaves. Six millions of armed men, determined to die or to be free, present

“carnage, and covered with the blood of their countrymen,  
 “at length retired; but they tied to the tails of their horses  
 “several of the inhabitants, whom they dragged away as a  
 “trophy of their inhuman triumph. We request an aid of  
 “fifty thousand livres to relieve the present wants of our  
 “community, as the loss we have sustained, is estimated at  
 “more than five hundred thousand livres.”



to you a lofty and impregnable rampart, over which the eagles of despotism will, in vain, attempt to soar.

The arts of bribery, it is affirmed, have also been tried, and certain hands, albeit unused to the giving mood, have not disdained to administer the chalice of corruption. Upon this subject, it is in vain to address men, whose consciences have ceased to admonish, who have faces that cannot blush, and hearts that cannot feel.—To him so formed, however elevated his station, I address myself NOT; for I write only to human beings. But there are many among you, virtuous but misguided. Such men I would seriously advise to consider, how far any government is justified in converting the earnings of industry into the wages of sin, and in applying those sums, which are given as the means of public defence, to the vile purposes of perfidy and corruption. Those objects of war, which cannot be compassed by fair and honourable hostility, ought not to be compassed at all. An end, which has no means but such as are unlawful, is an unlawful end. If there is any feature in particular, which exhibits this war as a more marked object of abhorrence, it is not that the blood of man is shed, but that

I

the moral elements, which compose his nature, are dissolved; and that confidence, without which society is a curse, is sapped to its foundations, by the poison of corruption.

The wickedness of the measure is superior only to its weakness. What coffers so full, however profligate the principles of the possessor, and there are individuals, Fellow Citizens, I am informed, whose hoards are at once so secret and so enormous, as to baffle calculation as to their quantity, and conjecture as to their place, what coffers so full, I say, as to be competent to corrupt thirty millions of people?—The foolish project resembles the labours of the daughters of Danaus.—It is filling a sieve with water.—Be assured, that he who wickedly destroys the security of his neighbour, by that very act, endangers his own. By practices so destructive of all human intercourse, you establish principles, which may recoil upon yourselves, and you may be entangled in the net which your own perfidy has woven.

Such, however, is the conduct of a government to the citizens of France, which, in the time of profound peace, resounded with complaints,

plaints, because her subjects had congratulated a nation of freemen, that tyranny was no more!

It is not, Fellow Citizens, by arts like these, that France seeks to preserve the allegiance of her own sons, or to repel the enmity of foreign states. Conscious, that justice is the only solid foundation of government, she exacts obedience only as she deserves it. "When the government" (says the thirty-fifth article of the constitution) "violates the rights of the people, insurrection becomes to the people, and to every portion of the people, the most sacred and indispensable of duties." Thus has France declared the people, not only the judges of their rights, but the avengers of their wrongs. She has legalized resistance. The voice of truth, speaking through the sacred organ of her constitution, has publicly proclaimed to a listening world, **THAT REBELLION TO TYRANTS IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD.**

That part of the community who are called the monied interest, and upon whom Pitt principally depends for the support of the war, should particularly weigh the probable consequences of its end, if the war be unsuccessful. A spirit of

enquiry has gone forth among men, and the foundation of the rights of property will be as accurately examined, as the foundation of the rights of persons. As the sum of public happiness and prosperity is composed of the industrious exertions of honest individuals, he who trenches upon their possessions, becomes a public robber, and an enemy of the human race. But, at the same time, I would impress upon that class of men, to whom I am now speaking, this important and irrefragable truth; that, as all property is acquired, enjoyed, and transmitted under the sanction of society, it is due to the public safety, whenever it is abused to its destruction. If Englishmen are once led to enquire into the right of their forefathers to tax that labour, a capacity to exert which has been their only inheritance, their rustic but penetrating understandings will deride the sophistry of those *financial* reasonings, which they will consider only as a cover to fraud, and the great pillar of corruption.—It is not, it is not, be it recollected, the sabre that is wrought at the manufactory of Sheffield, or the cannon that is cast in the foundery of Woolwich, which is the great instrument of destruction. These would be as harmless, as when they slumbered in the bowels of the earth, in their state of native oar,

if



if the accursed lust of gain, that great mover of human agency, and that great source of human evils, did not stimulate them into action.

*Effodiuntur opes irritamenta malorum.*

It is avarice, says an old poet, which has sown discord among brothers, which has excited mankind to massacre and war, and dissolved the ties of kindred and of blood.

When the public burdens become too heavy to be borne, a period which the war is rapidly bringing on, the poor must either perish under the pressure, or taking with them from their native country their industry and their household gods, emigrate into a foreign land. The rich will then be left alone to pay the penalty of those crimes, which avarice or ambition instigated them to commit. If the foundations of the great deep should be broken up, the vengeance of the people may overtake those, who supported the war, because they partook of the plunder; and for whose guilt, if it be measured by the miseries which it has occasioned, no human language can afford an adequate severity of reproach.

This,

This, indeed, is a subject which cannot be too delicately treated. To the class of men, therefore, whom I now address, what has already been said, will, I trust, prove sufficient; for there are those, whose intellects are quickened by a sense of interest, though they are deaf to the calls of justice, and blind to the light of truth.

The minister wants sixteen millions, which, together with a deficit of five millions in the revenue, make up the enormous sum of twenty-one millions. The opening of the budget, like the opening of the box of Pandora, will pour forth innumerable evils, enormous taxes, upon the good people of England; to whose impositions, there seems to be no other limit, than their patience to bear them. A tax upon Irish linen, a tax upon shoes, and upon a number of articles which constitute the necessaries of life, are to be proposed and carried.—You are then literally to be taxed from top to toe, from the shirt upon your back, to the shoe upon your foot; while a wasteful prodigality is pervading every department of the state, and the greatness of your empire, like that of a pit, encrease in proportion to what is taken from it. The red book (properly so called, indeed, for the outside blushes for the contents of the

the in,) since the commencement of the war, has been swelled by additional bands of pensioners and placemen. Two boards, the India board, and the board of agriculture, with considerable salaries annexed, have been recently established. The exchequer bill board for issuing five millions of money, for the relief of distressed traders, has also been added, and commissioners have been nominated to extend the patronage and influence of the crown. Thus the war makes bankrupts, to succour whom a baneful influence is created, and evil follows evil, which, like Dryden's double poison, serves only to expel the other. In the mean time, while oppression cripples industry at home, calamity lours upon our arms abroad. The ignominious flight of the British troops before Dunkirk, the total defeat of the Hanoverians at Hoondschoote, and the discomfiture and retreat of the Austrians from Maubeuge, be assured, my countrymen, are only the forerunners of events still more disastrous. Remember, that the few places which you now hold in France, you hold only by a brittle tenure. It was only in the beginning of November last, during the first campaign, that the arms of France began to display their vigour, and to scatter terror around them. The battle of Gemappe was fought, and one  
victory

victory decided the fate of the Netherlands. The Dutch have absolutely refused to march, as they entertain the strongest aversion from a war, of which, they perceive, that they are only the victims. Holland may be again entered, the bank of Amsterdam, which Burke tells you, is identified with the bank of England, may fall a prey to the arms of the victorious republic, and the tri-coloured flag may again wave in triumph over the fortresses of the United Provinces. Remember also, that it was only when the Duke of Brunswick advanced towards the capital, it was not until that menacing meteor was blackening her horizon, that the people of France proved themselves great in arms. A free people, like a high mettled and spirited individual, grow indignant from oppression, and derive additional energy from the dangers which surround them.

*Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso*

*Ducit opes, animumque ferro.*

If France succeeds, Amalthea's horn is in her hand, and she pours forth the blessings of liberty and peace; and if she falls, she brings down with her, justice, virtue, and the cause of freedom, and



and the nation which is buried in their ruins, is happier than the nation which survives them.

**MEN OF ENGLAND**, who are advocates for the war, rely not on those numerous and disciplined armies, which you yourselves have seen, for many months, only hovering over the frontiers of France, but which have not been able to penetrate into her interior. The extraordinary exertions of the continental tyrants pervade only the surface, but the vital spirit languishes within. Like the dying convulsions of a giant, they are not signs of health, but symptoms of dissolution, and may be termed rather agonies, than efforts.

I have now proved, Fellow Citizens, I hope, to your conviction, that the war is unjust, because its object is conquest; and that it is impolitic, because there exists not a probability of success. If unjust, you cannot as good men, and if impolitic, you will not, as wise men, proceed in it.

But the object of the war Pitt tells you is now changed, and that England must have "indemnification for the past, and security for the future." Indemnification, for what? Has France

invaded your territory, or despoiled you of your commerce? In what has she injured you? She has injured you in nothing. If then you have received no injury, there is no ground for indemnification; and, as for security for the future, you stand precisely in the same relation to her, that you do to all other foreign powers, and have the best pledge for your future security, in your mutual interests to live in peace. Indemnification for the past, and security for the future, are, therefore, only the words of a man, whose sole aim, to use the language in Job, is to "darken wisdom by words without understanding."

Another reason has been assigned for our aggression upon France, which, those who assign it, while they secretly laugh at the dupes of their imposture, do not themselves believe. It has, however, made an impression upon many good men, and, for that reason alone, deserves a refutation. With the present government of France, we cannot treat, say ministers, because they are a gang of Atheists, whom no treaties, and no signatures can bind. Those who prefer so heavy a charge, should at least be as ready with their proof, as they are ready with their accusation. But on this head they are silent. Because one mad-

man

man in the convention avowed himself an atheist, are we authorized to brand the whole body with opprobrium? As well might we assert, that the good Commons of England are righteous over much, because Hill is a Methodist; as well might we assert that they are an assembly of madmen, because Burke, in the paroxysms of his rage, has brandished a dagger. Is a charge to be brought against the new government of France, as a pretext for the war, of that very vice, of which the old government, which we now are labouring to restore, was so notoriously guilty? Before the revolution Atheism was avowedly the creed of the Court; and while Atheism was professed, even worse than Atheism was practised; as he who professes that he believes in no God, is not so bad as he who lives as if there were none. During the æra of royalty, France was governed neither by the precepts of morality, nor the injunctions of religion. She was governed by will. By the arbitrary will of the worst of her own subjects; of the worst of both sexes; of the worst of the human race. By Maria Antoinetta, a profligate adulteress, by her pathic Polignac; by Provence, by Artois, by Calonne, by Breteuil; by princes that were stupid or mad; by women that were abandoned to ambition and to lust; by

ministers who are exiled plunderers, panders and parasites, insolent and rapacious. Yet, with this sweet unleavened mass, the Cabinet of Saint James's, disdained not to hold intercourse, and, at this period, are receiving into their bosoms the missionaries of those, at whose gigantic crimes the great author himself must look with envy and exultation.

Men of England, that religion which consists in a love of virtue and a detestation of vice; in a sense of our dependence on the Creator of the world; in a conformity to his will, and in a regular practice of those moral duties, which, as social beings, we owe to each other, is the infallible symptom of an upright heart. But let us not be deceived by a specious exterior. The religion of some men, like the Sodom apple, is fair without, but rotten at the core. The strictest attention to the ceremonies of religion is perfectly compatible with the grossest violation of the duties of morality; and examples are not wanting among kings themselves, who chaunt their morning orisons to the groans of their people, and who, with pious profanation, uplift those hands to the throne of mercy, which are still reeking with the blood of their subjects,

In



In one sense, indeed, the war may truly be called a war of religion ; for it resembles the crusades in the madness of the principle, and in the cruelty of the persecution. In our attempt to rebuild the Temple of Tyranny, like the Jews in rebuilding the temple of their forefathers, we carry on the holy work with one hand, and hold our swords in the other to defend it.

Several members of both Houses have not scrupled to avow, that the war is a war of anger, as well as of interest, and, that the popular principles which prevail in France, must be extirpated, before Europe can reasonably expect peace. Whatever may be the system of French government, in the opinion of those men, this, at least, may be, with confidence, asserted ; that, harassed as she is by hostilities without, and by faction within, the principles of France have not hitherto received a fair opportunity of displaying their natural effects. The minds of Frenchmen have been inflamed by injuries, and irritated by reproach. Under all these circumstances, can we wonder at those excesses, which, however to be lamented, have invariably attended all great revolutions. But in no human system can we expect, that good should be complete, it is sufficient  
if

if it be predominant. The fair mode of determining upon the merits of the government which France has adopted, is, not by inspecting, with captious and malignant acuteness, the excesses which she has committed (excesses occasioned by those very men who are the first to clamour against them) but by a dispassionate examination of the principles of her system, to decide, whether they are not better calculated, if allowed a free and full operation, to produce the greatest sum of human happiness, which human talents have hitherto been able to erect upon the broad basis of human integrity. This is the only ground of rational discussion; all the rest is malignant prejudice, or idle declamation. If the war is undertaken, as it has been asserted, to change the principles of Frenchmen, the means are strangely adapted to the end. Force never yet made men other than hypocrites, or ——— martyrs. Instead of subsidizing half of the mercenaries in Europe, his majesty's ministers would, far better, have employed those meek and diligent pastors, the learned doctors of Oxford, Cambridge, and Gottingen, whose duty, (however violated by their practice) is to preach peace and not a sword. Those disinterested academies would doubtless abandon, without a pang, their comfortable emoluments

monuments; and their cloystered cells, the peaceful scenes of slumber and meditation, to engage in this bloodless, but useful warfare; and Europe would look unappalled upon a contest, the object of which, if force be the instrument, is to sweep from the earth thirty millions of men, with the besom of destruction.

I have now mentioned to you, Fellow Citizens, every possible object of the war, all of which are equally unlawful. I know of no other indeed, unless the minister means to renew the wasteful wars of the Plantagenets, and to revive, in the person of our gracious Sovereign, the dormant claims on his ancient kingdom of France.

By the law of Scotland, the king could not declare war without the concurrence of the nation. This invaluable right was recognized at the Revolution, and afterwards at the Union. But towards the close of the reign of Queen Anne, a reign in which the interests of Britain were shamefully sacrificed to the ambitious views of the House, this right was abolished.

In America, that happy land of freedom and an equality of rights, the blood of man is never shed

shed to satiate the cruelty and ambition of crowned heads. America is without courts, and therefore she is without wars. Wars are even prevented by the very structure of the government. If a dispute arises between two Commonwealths, concerning a tract of land, or a branch of commerce, a court of commissioners composed of two deputies from each state, is immediately convened to decide upon the merits of the business. With these enlightened republicans, reason, as it is the only proper, so it is the sole arbiter of differences. In the year 1784 a large tract of western territory was claimed both by the Commonwealths of Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Commissioners from each state were appointed, and met at Trenton in the Jerseys. The ground of the respective claim of each party was examined, and a decision was made in favour of Pennsylvania. The decision was peaceably acquiesced in as soon as it was pronounced. Had this dispute arisen in Europe, a hundred thousand lives would have been lost in deciding it; or, had it even been settled without an appeal to the sword, millions would have been squandered in the mummery of negotiation. In America, the business was effected at a small expence, and without the effusion of a single drop of blood.

In



In America, that country which God and man have concurred to render the blisful habitation of abundance and of peace, the poor are not broken down by taxes to support the expensive trappings of royalty, or to pamper the luxury of an insolent nobility. No lordly peer tramples down the corn of the husbandman, no proud prelate wrings from him the tythe of his industry. They have neither chicanery in ermine, nor hypocrisy in lawn. The community is not there divided into an oppressed peasantry and an overgrown aristocracy, the one of whom lives by the plunder of the state, while the others are compelled to be the objects of it. Plenty is the lot of all, superfluity of none.

An equal and undistinguishing law is the only sovereign acknowledged by a free and an united people, which, as all contribute to make, so all are inclined to support. The word subordination, a term unknown in the vocabulary of freemen, and which means only a reciprocation of slavery and tyranny, never wounds the ear of the high-minded republican. Order, real order is preserved, because no man has an interest in disturbing it. The peace of millions cannot there be broken by the bloody disposition of *one* man.

L

The

The maxims of the Prince of Peace are not only preached but practised. The trumpet of war is never sounded by the heralds of despotism, to enkindle a spirit of murder and of rapine. Dungeons, whips, chains, racks, and gibbets are not there resorted to as lessons of morality, or instruments of conviction. Crimes are not often punished with rigour, because they are prevented by instruction. Above all, a baneful luxury, which engenders diseases, that not only imbitter life, but poison the very source of it, is there unknown. They have no wants but such as nature gives, and which may be easily supplied by a moderate degree of labour. Life is simple, and therefore it is happy.

This is not the gaudy picture of a distempered imagination, but the real representation of things which are. Many years have I resided in the bosom of that country, and have seen and felt the blessings which I describe ; and therefore, with honest pride, and conscious truth, I hold it up as an object of admiration to the world.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS, the great source of the evil is here, the people of Europe in general have as little connection with their

their respective governments, except, indeed, as they are the object of their plunder, as they have with the governments of China or Japan. Does a gazette extraordinary, which announces the taking of Conde, or Valenciennes, enable you to procure one pint of beer, or a morsel of bread for your helpless and famishing children? Does the ringing of bells, the firing of cannon, or the illumination of shops, either lighten your labour, feed your hunger, or clothe your nakedness? Is there any wisdom in spilling the best blood in the country, to obtain that, from the possession of which you derive no advantage? Would not the candle which blazes before the door of the pensioned parasite of a court, be far better employed in cheering the gloomy cot of the solitary peasant? Victories which bring honour to the arms, may bring disgrace to the councils of a nation. I freely confess, that the glory acquired by his highness of York, on the plains of Famars, has no charms for me; nor am I delighted to hear, that the German eagle, that emblem of tyranny and massacre, now flies in triumph over the walls of a town, where lately waved the banners of freedom. By war, kings extend their dominions, and encrease their revenues, while the inferior animals that have hunted with the lion, are amply rewarded

for all the sweat and blood, which their loyalty has cost them, by the honour of having sweated and bled in such company.

Man is not naturally hostile to man. He is made for labour, and not for war. The very structure of your bodies must convince you of this truth. You have neither the tusks of the boar, nor the fangs of the tyger. The cries of distress, by instinctive impulse, assail the heart of man, and the hand of man, by involuntary motion, is stretched out to relieve it. *God made man perfect, but he has sought out many inventions.* Whence, then, have arisen, the ills of which we complain? An order of men have arisen, in society, who, claiming privileges, not only distinct from, but even opposite to the common interest of the people, have found, that the only means of preserving those privileges, were to keep you in the dark, and to make you at once, the dupes and victims of their projects. Hence a spirit of discord is excited among you, and those hands which were destined, by the goodness and wisdom of Providence, to clasp in a fond embrace, the wife of your bosom, and the children of your loins, are now doomed to forge the weapons



pons of war, and to be bathed in the blood of innocent man.

It is clear, that before a man can perform his duty, it is necessary that he know it. If government claims the right of punishment, it necessarily incurs the duty of instruction. But of the thousands who fall victims to the rigour of your laws, how few have government taken the pains to instruct! Nay, by wringing from the poor the scanty pittance which their hard labour earns, to support lords of the bedchamber, wardens of cinque ports, gentlemen of the band of pensioners, have they left them aught, but the melancholy alternative of perishing in the ditch, or plundering on the road. The snares of temptation are every where set around them. Governments, like the author of evil, first make the criminal, and then punish the crime. The property of the rich is every where hedged round by the fences of the law, while the little possessions of the poor are exposed to depredation. The lordly peer may trample down, with impunity, the corn of the husbandman; but if the peasant kills a hare to give food to his family, he is sentenced to pay the sum of three pounds, which he has no means of obtaining, and if he cannot per-

perform an impossibility, is sent, by the decree of *justice*, to perish in a gaol.

The moral law is engraven upon the fleshy tablets of the heart of man, by the finger of God, of which reason is the interpreter, and conscience the judge; but moral distinctions are every where confounded, or obliterated, by legal artifices. The principle, which should apportion the penalty to the crime, is wantonly violated, and the code of criminal jurisprudence, to the far greater part of mankind, exhibits only a black and bloody roll of penalty and proscription. A member of parliament, whether he be lord or commoner, may squander in riot, gambling, and dissipation, the property of the honest and industrious tradesman, and may proudly bespatter, with his carriage wheels, the man whom his extravagance has reduced to beggary. Their sacred persons no rude hand of a sheriff's officer dares to contaminate. But the ruined tradesman, should he owe the sum of ten pounds, which the villainy of his *betters* has disabled him from paying, is unfeelingly hurried into a prison, deprived of an opportunity of exercising his calling, and is suffered to glide into the silent tomb unpitied, and forgotten.

The

The practice of municipal law is adapted to the principle. The practice of law, which ought to be an exact distribution of justice, is only a gainful application to the little arts of chicane. The great object of all law, is to secure us in the enjoyment of our lives and properties. How is this effect under the present system? As much money is spent in the attempt to obtain our right, as the thing contended for is worth; and he, who is not injured by the injustice of the decision, is frequently ruined by the delay of the suit. To the bulk of mankind, property is only valuable, because it affords to them the means of subsistence. But if obstructions and delays are thrown in our way of obtaining it, the great end for which property is acquired, is frustrated, and the relief, for which application is made to a court of judicature, cut off. Yet if life, that sacred boon of heaven, is the subject of decision, a few hours are deemed sufficient to determine, whether I shall peaceably possess, or ignominiously lose it. Absurd and preposterous regulation! which inverts every substantial rule of justice, which produces dispatch, where there should be deliberation, and deliberation where there should be dispatch, and which makes the herbage of the field, and the very clod we tread upon, of more  
 estima-

estimation in the eye of justice, than the sacred image of the great Father of the universe, rational and immortal man !

This horrid perversion could never have taken place, if the judgment seat had not become a shop of traffic ; and if justice, which should be freely dispensed, could not be procured at all, unless it were dearly purchased.

The law, we have been pompously told, is equally open to the poor and to the rich. With equal truth it might be asserted, that there is no act of parliament to prevent you from flying. Yet if money be the sole instrument by which we are enabled either to obtain or to defend our right, he who is without wings may as well attempt to fly, as he who is without money may attempt to obtain justice. He has then no other alternative, than to sit down the patient victim of the injury which he has sustained, for should he exert that force, with which nature has armed him, as the last resource of obtaining redress, the dragon fangs of the law are fastened in his vitals, and he perishes.

To the want of an adequate representation in parliament may be traced all our sufferings, under  
what-



whatever aspect they are presented, whether disgrace abroad or distraction at home.—*Patriæ et Trojæ communis Erinnyes*.—That government is essentially defective, which does not only conjoin, but even identify the interests of the representative body with the constituent.—This is the only solid pledge and security, that the general weal, and not partial interests, will be the great object of legislation. When the person employed has an interest different from his employer, it may naturally be supposed, that he will pursue his own, and neglect that of another man. Now all war, as it multiplies places, and encreases the receipts of government, (at least while the war endures) extends, of course, the power and patronage of the minister, though it loads the people with additional taxes. Here, then, is a simple statement, which proves, at once, that government, in declaring war, must always have an interest distinct from the people. As long as the war lasts, government has immense sums to dispose of, and as revenue has, hitherto, been the objects of governments, the hope of making conquests will induce them to carry on the war, as long as the people will submit to it. Every addition of territory furnishes a new field for the collection of more taxes, every conquered dis-

tract is considered as a new farm, and the people, who cultivate it, being regarded as sheep, are annually brought up to be shorn of their fleeces.

The American war alone, were no other fact produced, would prove the necessity of an adequate representation of the people in Parliament. The indignant voice of the nation at last influenced the decisions of that assembly, who, in the same vote by which they abandoned the war, affixed, to those who should support it, a scandal and reproach, which held them up as objects of execration to their country. But the injury had been committed, the mischief was irretrievable, and the vote, therefore, which was passed by the Commons, like the death-bed repentance of a wicked sinner, served only to cover that venal assembly with shame.

By that war, agents, commissaries, clerks, contractors, amassed immense sums, while you, the people, were loaded with an additional debt of one hundred millions. If the great body of the nation had been *so connected with the house of Commons*, as either to have nominated the members of that house, or to have had the power of recalling them when they were hunting for places  
and

and ruining their country, that nefarious war, even if it had been undertaken, could not long have endured. As soon as you saw that the contest was hopeless and ruinous, you yourselves, speaking to your servants in a tone of concealed authority, would instantly have put an end to it. Inflamed as your passions might have been by the insidious artifices of interested statesmen, who, like tygers, fatten upon human gore, adversity would have taught you the lessons of wisdom. Your patient callous tempers would have been quickened into a sensibility, at once awful to your rulers, and salutary to yourselves. Let not then instruction, my countrymen, which has been so dearly purchased, be purchased in vain.

The present war threatens us with evils of the same nature, and of deeper malignity. Your manufacturers are reduced to the melancholy alternative either of starving in the streets, or of taking up the trade of slaughter and rapine, and of preserving their own lives by the destruction of others. They subsist, not by their own industry, but by the miseries of their neighbours. Your sailors are torn from their families, not to carry on or increase your commerce, but to prevent that intercourse among nations, which con-

institutes the life of it. Your funds, that barometer  
 of public credit, have fallen 20 per cent. and,  
 upon any disastrous events which the war may  
 produce, will sink to so alarming a degree as to  
 extinguish the small remains of national confi-  
 dence. Your papers are filled with lists of bank-  
 rupts, and many are actually so whose situations  
 have never been presented to the public eye. Your  
 prisons, resounding with blasphemous execration,  
 shrieks of wretchedness, and dissolute riot, are  
 crowded with convicts, your streets swarm with  
 beggars putrefying with vermin and with filth, and  
 your capital is thronged with prostitutes, who, de-  
 prived of the support of the father, the husband,  
 and the brother, now gone to fight the battles of  
 government in a foreign land, are driven into  
 the haunts of infamy and vice, with no other  
 prospect of terminating their miserable career, than  
 to rot in hospitals, languish in gaols, or perish  
 upon the gibbet. Of this enormous mass of hu-  
 man vices and human calamities, what is the

† The author knows that a very great number of dockets  
 were struck in the commissioner of bankrupt's office in Som-  
 erset-house, which never appeared in the Gazette. Six super-  
 numerary clerks were added to that office as soon as the war  
 broke out; yet Dundas tells us, that these bankrupts are a

proof of our prosperity.



corrective, and what is the relief? Sanguinary punishments have been long tried, and have been tried in vain. The avenging sword of the law may pierce the heart of man, but it does not amend it; the prisons are emptied into the grave, but the sum of human morals remains the same.

In this awful season of national calamity I see no other resource, than the interposition of the great body of the people themselves, electing deputies in whom they can confide, and imparting instructions which they must injoin to be executed.

The objections to this plan, I foresee, may be two; the first as to its legality, the second as to its utility. These objections I shall separately consider.

The spirit, genius, and history of a government, which calls its free, its ancient practices, as well as positive statutes, must be consulted in cases which are new and extraordinary. In law, as in divinity, 'the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.' If Englishmen had always been cooped and cabined within the narrow limits of established forms, the Revolution of 1688, which seated, by  
its

its consequences, the house of Brunswick on the throne, would never have been effected. When that memorable event took place, an express declaration of the *public* consent was obtained at the desire of the prince, who, no doubt, judged it essential to the validity of his title. A judicious expedient, says Hume, was fallen on for that purpose. All the members who had sitten in the House of Commons during any parliament of Charles the Second, were invited to meet; and to them were added the Mayor, Aldermen, and fifty of the Common Council. That this was far from being an adequate representation of the people, every man who knows the state of this country must admit. Yet the fact proves, which is sufficient for my purpose, that our ancestors thought themselves authorized to act without *precedent*, and to carry a plan into execution, the good effects of which are known. It produced an *amendment* of the constitution. The English constitution, you will find, has not always been fixed. Since the Norman conquest, it has been gradually changing. To these changes we owe our liberties. Suppose a greater degree of liberty to be possible, is the same authority incompetent to make the changes by which so desirable an object may be obtained?

This

This I know, that the peaceful assembling of men to deliberate on the best mode of promoting the public welfare, is no where forbidden by any positive statute. Now whatever is not prohibited by law, is permitted by it. If the *right* of assembling then is lawful, the *power* of exercising that right is a necessary consequence of it. Law, in general, being only a rule of action, conducive to public utility, whatever contributes to promote it, falls necessarily within the definition.

It is not fair to ask us for the precise written law, which invests the people with this right. The non-existence of such a written law does not prove the non-existence of the right. Many of the rights of the people depend upon custom. Many of the rights of each branch of the legislation itself depend upon custom. In the case which I am putting, the right is proved uncontradicted by any positive statute.

Besides, between the *express* will and *permissive* will of Parliament, there can be no difference, when the right has been already exercised on one side, and acquiesced in on the other. A stronger sense of right is not raised in the people, by a positive, than by a tacit, declaration of the acquiescence

quiescence of parliament. It would therefore, be as unjust to destroy a right raised by this tacit, as a right raised by any positive declaration.

Happily, however, the privilege which we claim, rests not upon reasonings of general expediency, or abstract speculations of right. Precedents of conventions, folk-motes, or meetings of the people are to be found in the early periods of our history, and are coeval with the existence of our constitution itself. They were part of the Anglo-Saxon government. The Saxons convened, every year, all the free men of the kingdom who composed an assembly called Mycelgemot, Folk-mote, or Convention. It was their business and duty to *revise* the conduct of the king and wittenagemot, or parliament. In the golden days of Alfred, a patriot king, if ever there was one, they met on Salisbury plain. The Mirror of Justice says, that it was their business "to take  
" care that the people received no wrong from  
" the king himself, his queen, or their children."  
" ren."

The king and nobles mixed promiscuously with the people in this folkmote, or convention, and were responsible for the exercise of the power entrusted



entrusted to them. The people, in the times of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, not only made but executed the laws of the kingdom. The words *liberi homines*, or free men, described, I know, only men who held lands ; and the *lazzi*, *villains*, or slaves, were numerous. But personal slavery has long ceased in England, and the term *liberi homines*, or *free-men*, is now applicable in its strict and legal acceptation to every man not incapacitated by crimes or insanity. The Norman conquest planted by force that law of robbers, the tree of feudal tyranny in England, which over-awed the goodly fabric of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence. But though the exercise of the rights of the people was disturbed for a time, they never were annihilated.

During the civil wars which frequently agitated England after the invasion of the Normans, the restitution of the Saxon charter of Ina, of the charter of Edward the Confessor, were frequently insisted on, as a condition of the peace, which they granted to the sovereign. The practices of our Saxon ancestors, were always, in times of danger and convulsion, sought for, as precedents to be pleaded, and examples to be imitated ; and Hume well observes, that if Europe enjoys a  
N
larger

larger portion of freedom than her neighbours, it is owing to the seeds implanted in her soil by those generous barbarians. These barbarians, however, as we have seen, had nothing barbarous in their policy \*.

But in all cases of emergency, **THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE IS THE SOVEREIGN LAW.** This principle, fortified by historical precedent, and supported by the reason of the thing, must at once answer the cavils of disputacious lawyers, and the declamations of interested statesmen.—Nor is the measure unknown to the times in which we live. Ireland, that country, from which I boast my descent, Ireland, for which, as it has been emphatically said, God has done so much, and man so little, and which has, hitherto, alas! been only a resting place for birds of passage, and a banquet for birds of prey, has long since set the example of the plan which I propose. Was it not proved, during the course of the last summer, that a convention was legal, by the particular interposition of the parliament of Ireland to pass a law to prevent it

\* See Bacon's Hist. and Polit. Discourses on Government; Squire's Essay on the Anglo-Saxon Government, and the Letters of that truly enlightened man David Williams.

from meeting. Fond as those *gentlemen* are of exercising the gainful trade of legislation, this pious and useful work, like all other pious and useful works of supererogation, would doubtless, have been omitted by them, had it not been justified by their view of the necessity of the measure. To frame a law, in order to mark as illegal any particular act, proves, more than a thousand arguments, the lawfulness of the act, before the law had taken place. As the parliament of England are now in the recess, we, my countrymen, can have no such obstruction to dread. The present time is the proper one, and you ought not criminally to suffer it to glide over. Indeed, I entertain too profound a respect for that venerable body of men, the parliament of England, to imagine, for a moment, that they would overleap the barriers of a justifiable authority, and impede a measure legal in its principle, salutary in its effects, and calculated to strengthen the foundations of government. I say to strengthen the foundations of government, for by a movement thus regular and tranquil, its operations would be facilitated, and its dignity preserved. Burke ranks it among public misfortunes, that the house of commons should be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of

doors. By this want of sympathy, he says **THEY WOULD CEASE TO BE A HOUSE OF COMMONS.** Kings, lords, and judges, he adds, are all trustees for the house of commons, because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder.† The will of the people, Fellow Citizens, freely collected, and firmly expressed, would operate as a law upon those trustees of the people, who would listen to your requests with no other emotion, than that of sorrow for the necessity which you were laid under of making them.

Towards the close of the American war, associations were formed in various parts of England, either by the sheriff summoning the freeholders of the county, or by the influence of noblemen and gentlemen over neighbours, inviting them to deliberate on the grievances of the nation. The late Sir George Saville, the friend of Mr. Burke, was a great promoter of them, and Mr. Wyvill, then the friend of Mr. Pitt, was the chairman of the association which met at York. They openly corresponded with other associations. They met without interruption; and the lawfulness of their

† See *Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents.*



proceeding was never disputed. The members of the house of commons had not then lost the confidence of the people. Many of them assisted at those deliberations, the object of which was to effect a reform in parliament, and a general redress of grievances. The Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt were members of another association, whose object was the same. They were joined by the acute, intrepid, and intelligent Horne Tooke, Major Cartwright, and John Frost; the last of whom has been selected as a victim to a state prosecution, because the consistency of *his* conduct in promoting a parliamentary reform, was a foul, though tacit reproach on the apostasy of those, with whom he formerly acted. If precedents were necessary then, here they are. It is true, the union of those associations was not so close and intimate, as the plan which I shall propose; but the principle was the same, the object was the same, and the legality, therefore, must be the same. Had their union been more complete, and their sitting more permanent, the object, for which they met, must certainly have been accomplished; and the house of commons would now have been, what Burke says, every house of commons ought to be, "an express image of the feelings of the people;" and not,  
what

what my eloquent and philosophical friend, has justly described it, " a cumbrous and expensive chamber to register the edicts of the minister."

A public expression of your wishes is also the best, because it is the safest mode of obtaining a reform. " Take away liberty of complaint," (says the wise Bacon) " the griefs of the subject will bleed inwards: sharp and eager humours will not evaporate, and then they will exulcerate; AND SO MAY ENDANGER THE SOVEREIGNTY ITSELF."

As a friend to peace, therefore, for which no sacrifice is too dear, but the sacrifice of freedom, let me earnestly exhort you to adopt the measure.

It is to a want of this salutary step, that I must attribute the indecent rejection of your petitions, during the last sessions.

The orator of the Treasury, whose only merit consists " in spouting forth a little froth stream upon a gaudy day," got rid of your applica-

tion, † Mackintosh's Vindicia Gallicæ

tion, by a dexterity of manœuvre, for which he is so distinguished. By suffering the petitions to lie upon the table, by refusing to go into a consideration of the grievances stated, he impliedly told you, that they were not even worthy of his notice. Had the contents of those petitions been properly examined, he and his associates must have been involved in this dilemma, they must either have come to the resolution, that the house of commons *is* an adequate representation of the people, or have afforded a redress to your well-grounded complaints. With the latter the arch-apostate was determined not to comply, and the former could never have been enrolled upon their journals, unless the sacred voice of the senate had been made to pronounce a lie, and those records, which ought to have been the eternal monuments of truth, had become the vouchers of calumny and imposture. That the *time* was improper, was the miserable excuse under which Pitt sheltered his conduct; an excuse, which no man can admit, unless his understanding be sunk below the milkiness of infancy. Times, my friends, are but of two kinds. Either they are turbulent, or they are peaceable. If turbulent, what so proper to allay all ferment among the people, as a ready compliance with those requisitions,

sions, which the minister in his days of professional patriotism had publickly and repeatedly declared to be just? If peaceable, what so well calculated, as a compliance with their wishes, to perpetuate to the people the blessings they enjoy? All times are proper, for doing those things which are proper. Our duties are perpetual and unchangeable, and fluctuate not with the variations of the season, and the ebbings of the ocean.

#### FELLOW CITIZENS,

Your inadequate representation in parliament has of late, undergone so full a discussion, that you, no doubt, are well acquainted with the subject. On this head, therefore, very little is necessary to be said. By the report† of a society, which calls itself “The Friends of the People,” it appears, that many of your *pretended* representatives are self-created, self-elected, self-existent; that others are the mere tools of an austere and insolent aristocracy, of a corrupt treasury junto, or of a wealthy and upstart commoner.—By their accurate and authentic statement, the

† See Report of the Committee, published Saturday, 9th February, 1793; which I earnestly recommend to your perusal.

people



people of England will see, that seventy-one peers expressly nominate ninety members, and, by influence, procure the return of seventy-seven, while ninety-one commoners nominate eighty-two members, and by influence procure the return of fifty-seven.

71 Peers and the Treasury nominate	-	90
Procure the return of	-	77
Patronage of 71 Peers and Treasury		<u>167</u>
91 Commoners nominate	—	82
Procure the return of	—	57
Patronage of 91 Commoners		<u>139</u>

Therefore 162 men in your country return 306  
out of 573  
members.

Thus it is evident, that one hundred and sixty-two men do, in effect, make laws for you, the people of England, who amount to six millions,

At the commencement of every session, it is true, the following resolution is entered on the journals, Resolved, “ that it is a high infringe-  
O “ ment

“ment of the liberties and privileges of the commons of Great Britain, for any lord of parliament, or any lord lieutenant of any county, to concern themselves in the election of members to serve for the Commons in Parliament.” The farce of this resolution, indeed, is played off at the beginning of every session, but, when we see men violating their own resolutions by the very means by which they are enabled to pass them, what shall we say, but that it is adding a mockery of your understandings, to a privation of your rights.

The authenticity of the statement, which we have referred to, is indubitable ; since many persons who signed it are members of that very assembly whose mode of appointment they reprobate.

It is beneath the dignity of reason to stoop to a refutation of the nonsensical jargon of virtual representation, which has long been bandied about in a constant repercussion from one blockhead to another, but which has only stunned our ears without informing our understandings. Justice requires that men, who are only virtually represented should only be virtually punished. If the  
 repre-

representative principle be a good one, let us not be insulted by being told, that we have it, when we have it not; and if it be not a good one, let it be formally abolished, and a better substituted in its stead. If the word representation means any thing, it means adequate representation; and he only is adequately represented who has personally the power of sending a deputy to enact laws for the government of his conduct. If a partial representation be meant, let it be boldly affirmed, and we are at issue with our opponents; and if it be added that the good practical effects, which have flowed from such a system, are a sufficient answer to all objections, I reply, that the melancholy history of the events of the last century, which I have briefly sketched out to you, gives the lie to the assertion; which, even if it were admitted, would prove nothing, since the human mind is not supposed to be stationary in politics any more than in any other science; and since society is entitled, not only to that partial good which establishments have hitherto produced, but to the greatest possible sum of happiness which the ingenuity of man can devise, and the honesty of man can administer. That things have gone on well, as it is called, is a barefaced and an audacious falsehood; and though the as-

assertion has been repeatedly made in the House of Commons, yet, like many other falsehoods, it carries with it its own refutation ; for, after the melancholy experience which we have had to the contrary, there needs no stronger proof of the falsehood of the assertion than that men should be suffered with impunity to make it.

It has been said, and upon this topic what absurdity has not been said, that, though many persons when individually considered, are not represented ; yet, that the House of Commons when collectively met, represent the whole nation ; and, that they equally represent the towns of Birmingham and Sheffield, which send no deputies, as they represent the towns of London, Bristol, and Liverpool, which do. In the same manner, does the Grand Seignior, when sitting in divan, attended by his Viziers and Reis Effendis, represent the whole Turkish empire ; in the same manner does he represent the provinces of Khurdistan and Thrace, the remote cities of Bassora and Aleppo, whose inhabitants never had a single voice in his appointment, and to whom he is only known (like other legislators) by his grievous exactions ; while his firman, fortified by the terrors of the bow-string, exacts implicit obedience,



obedience, in the framing of which his subjects have had as great a share as many of the good people of England have had in the framing of those acts of parliament, which, being written in the old black letter, and never promulgated are, with the firman of the Turk, equally difficult to be understood, and, with the imperial mandates of that pure vicegerent of God, equally dangerous to be resisted.

There are not, there cannot be, more than two subjects of representation ; persons and property. But the present system represents neither. Persons are not represented, because 5723 † persons, who are influenced, as we have seen, by a much smaller number, return a majority of the House of Commons, though the adult males throughout Great Britain, amount to 125,000 ‡. Property is not represented, for the county of Cornwall, one of the poorest in the 52, sends 45 members to parliament, while the county of Middlesex, which contains the greater part of the wealth of the kingdom, sends only eight. In some boroughs, the man who boils a pot, has the privi-

† See Burgh's Political Disquisitions, vol. I.

‡ See the same author.

lege of voting for a member of parliament; though he who possesses a hundred thousand pounds in the funds, has not.

Is this, my countrymen, the representation of which you boast? Is this the happy constitution, which it is insanity not to admire, and against which it is blasphemy to speak?

The boroughs of Gatton and old Sarum, though scarcely the vestige of a town remains, send as many members as the city of London, that mart of industry and wealth. The rank grass, emblematical of their state, now grows, in those desolate and abandoned places, and their sole manufactory, as Burke as well observed, is in members of parliament. Yet four respectable gentlemen represent their departed greatness, as the knights at a coronation represent the duchies of Normandy and Aquitaine.

From this want of conjunction of the interests of the people and the parliament, the fairest fruit of freedom is blighted. The tree of liberty can never flourish, unless its roots strike deep into the soil of universal suffrage. The rotten branches which not only wither its beauty, but exhaust  
its

its sap, should therefore be lopt off, and a free and vivifying representation should be engrafted in their place. *Inutiles ramos amputans, feliciores inserit.*

I am aware, Fellow Citizens, that every artifice, which ministerial and factious cunning can devise, will be played off upon your understandings, to prevent a convention, that only mode of national salvation. The ghost of insurrections which, during the last winter, the forcerer of the treasury too successfully evoked, may be again conjured up from its peaceful grave, to intimidate you from a spirited assertion of your rights. You were then appalled by terrors, from which even the timidity of a Laplander would disdain to have shrunk. The delusion, indeed, has ceased, but the shame of having been the bubbles and the victims of it, still adheres to you. But, if it exists for your shame, let it also exist for your instruction, and beware that you are not deterred from the performance of your duty by the stale incantations of that pompous magician.

In truth, no man laughed more than the minister himself at the easiness of your credulity; who, when the farce was over, might have addressed

dressed you in the language of Grizzle to queen  
Dollalolla,

I tell you, Madam, it is all a trick,

I made the giants first, and then I killed them.

Tragedy of Tom Thumb.

But the consequences of this panic, had it continued much longer, would have been as destructive in its consequences, as it was groundless in its cause. A general spirit of distrust pervaded all ranks and descriptions of men. Insurrections, which were every where to be heard of, and no where to be seen, created an alarm the more terrifying in its nature, as they were muffled up in the darkness and mystery of incertitude. A system of *espionage* was established, and sanctioned by the countenance of government. Magistrates prostituted their sacred functions, and scrupled not to retrieve their bankrupt fortunes, by receiving from the treasury the wages of corruption, which were to be the price of the honour and integrity of their office. The bands of friendship were dissolved, the blood of wholesome kindred was infected, and confidence, the great cement of civil society, was in danger of being utterly extinguished among men.

Nor



Nor was this all. A civil inquisition was erected over the consciences of men, and a despicable hireling of government became the modern Saint Dominic, the grand inquisitor to preside at the tribunal. The cry of church and king, which had, before, been the Shibboleth of the incendiaries of Birmingham, became the warhoop of the faction, and resounded through the nation; and these words were meant to convey, not the benignant doctrines of the meek and gentle Jesus, but a church without the gospel, and a king above the law.¶

I shall, now, lay before you the following plan of a convention. By this plan it will appear, that the *majority of wills*, will be, as it ought to be, the legitimate rule of government; as the negative of the crown will never be exercised in opposition to the declared sense of the nation. Such was the government of our Saxon ancestors, when they met, every year, in their folk-mote, or convention. The plan proposed, therefore, is not a breach, but a renovation of our constitu-

¶ Such were the expressions of the best and wisest divine whom the church of England now holds. I need scarcely name **THAT MAN**, my much loved and much honoured preceptor **SAMUEL PARR.**

P

tion.

tion. I need not be told, that a majority of wills and *right* are not convertible terms. This, I know, has been asserted in the house of commons, (and much stress has been laid upon it) by a man, who marshals his words by the discipline of logic, though he invigorates not his mind with the principles of wisdom. Yet to that man I would answer, that, though a majority of wills is not infallible, and therefore may sometimes produce, in government, a violation of *right*, yet it is the best mode of ascertaining *right* which human ingenuity can devise; for the question will perpetually recur, who are the best judges of the proper mode of conducting their own affairs. No particular set of men hold any charter of exemption from the frailties of human nature, and therefore, the people, if they are not governed by a majority of their own wills, can have no other alternative, than to be governed by *force*. In vain will you attempt to persuade them, that the measures, which you *compel* them to adopt, are more suitable to their interests, than the measures which are the suggestions of their own understandings — They will tell you, that happiness depends upon opinion, which object government is only instituted to procure; that government is a practical good, not an abstract

abstract speculation, and those measures therefore, must of necessity be the best, which the majority of the people have determined to be so. To this what answer can be given, but that the people are ignorant of their real interests, (a fact of which you will not persuade them) and that their governors have their welfare more nearly at heart, than the people themselves?—If you submit to their reasonings, you concede the point, for which the people contend; and if you do not, and, should they spurn at your decrees, in order to render your government effectual, your parchment laws, must be carried into execution, either by the aid, or the terror of the bayonet, and however you may dignify the system of your rule by epithets which your vanity, not your wisdom has applied, it is in fact, and in reality, the sword that governs.—Self-elected senators, in the plenitude of illicit power, may issue their mandates, and call them a code of justice, but reason will determine, that, if they are not representatives, they must be robbers.

In the plan which I shall offer, it will also be found, that persons, not property, are the objects of representation. Matter cannot feel, but man can. Life is the gift of God, of which no

man should be deprived, but by the operation of a law, to which his will has consented, and which his reason comprehends. He who forfeits life by any other means, may indeed fall by the formalities, but he suffers, in his person, a violation of justice.

With respect to property, I must observe, that the word has hitherto been used in a sense too loose and indefinite. Property is that, which he who possesses, possesses alone, peculiarly, and exclusively. *Proprietas est id, quod sibi proprium est.* In this true and proper acceptation of the word, property is not merely, the land which we inherit, or the money which we possess, but all those means both of mind, and of body, by which we are enabled to acquire the blessings of life. In this sense, the manual labour of the peasant, the ingenuity of the artist, the talents of the scholar, are the property of each; and the exercise of these being the means of their livelihood and convenience, are the sources of their happiness, and fit objects of protection. He who enjoys a comfortable income from the earnings of his industry, is equally a man of property, with him, who, by the partial regulations of society, inherits it from his ancestors.

has

The



The earnings of the labourer, the tradesman, and manufacturer, are, in many cases, and the productions of men of learning, and of science, are, in all cases regulated, by the power of parliament. Property alone, even in the loose and popular usage of the term, can, never, in the eye of reason and of virtue, be an object of respect, since it may be as well possessed by the profligate Chartres, as by the Man of Rofs. In no case, likewise, does it constitute a reasonable object of desire, but as it administers to the innocent gratification of him, who possesses it.—If wealth be sought after not as a mean, but as an end, the pursuit, however sanctified by the term of industry, not only becomes a vice, but commonly engenders the extirpation of all virtue.—Avarice is a passion of so cold, and blighting a nature, that it is generally the solitary tenant of whatever bosom it inhabits.—Like the great poisonous tree of Java, it is environed only by dreariness and desolation, and suffers no virtue to blossom around it.

But to return.—

Persons, then, we find, Fellow Citizens, are the only objects of representation; for persons  
and

and property are, in fact, so indissolubly connected, that if all persons are not represented, all property cannot be. The poor are, as frequently as the rich, parties to contracts, which regulate the mode, in which property shall pass from one party to the other; and their property, when acquired, is equally subject to regulation, and sometimes to forfeiture, by the operation of law. The great body of the people, who in all countries are not the rich, are equally bound by duty, and instigated by feeling, to afford protection to their wives, sisters, and daughters, against brutal lust and violence, and therefore are as much interested in those laws that regulate marriage, which is the parent of those connections.—After all, the people are the only fountain of power, and the great source of *revenue*; it is the people, who fight your battles in time of war, and cultivate your fields in time of peace, and therefore should be consulted in the creation of civil liberty, which is the result of laws defining the boundaries of mens actions, as citizens of the same community, and leaving them free within those boundaries; but for the permanent enjoyment of which, however, they have no security, unless they also possess *political liberty*, which is only the power of appointing persons

persons to transact the public business, and the power of dismissal, when they violate the trust reposed in them.

Nor need we dread the consequences of an improper use, or exercise of this power. If the people are right, the common force will be exerted for the common good; and if wrong, a sense of self-preservation from those evils, which their conduct has produced, will operate as a corrective of the errors into which they have fallen.

## PLAN OF CONVENTION.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE PRIMARY ASSEMBLIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ELECTING DEPUTIES.

First, In each primary assembly, a particular list shall be made of the citizens who compose it.

Second, The number of deputies, to meet in the convention, from England and Scotland, may be 375; that is to say, 250 from England, and 125 from Scotland.

Third, As the number of adult males, all of whom on our present plan are electors, amount  
in

in England to 125,000, they may be divided into 1250 primary assemblies; each parish containing one primary assembly, which shall have a right to choose ten electors.

Fourth, Let the ten electors so chosen form the one tenth of an intermediate body of electors, or secondary assembly, which shall be composed of ten neighbouring parishes.† This intervention of a secondary assembly, while it collects the public will, in the completest manner, secures, at the same time, the elections for deputies from those tumults and disorders, which sometimes accompany large meetings of the people.

Fifth, The secondary assembly so met to proceed to the choice of two deputies to be sent to the convention.

Sixth, The proportion of the primary electors to that of the deputies will be as 1 to 5000. All the primary assemblies collectively will then send 250 deputies; the population of England alone being estimated at six millions, if to these 250

† As men, not bricks and stones, are the proper objects of legislation, population not property is the basis of our plan. To effect this, a new division of parishes is here supposed.



English deputies we add 125 from Scotland elected in the same manner, and whose population may be estimated at three millions, the whole convention will form a body of 375 members to deliberate for the welfare of both countries.

OF THE STATE OF THE VOTERS, AND  
OF THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS  
FOR THE EXERCISE OF THEIR RIGHTS.

1st. Every man of the age of 21, who is neither a criminal, an idiot, nor a lunatic, has a right of voting.

2d. No man is to be deemed a criminal unless convicted of the charge alledged by a jury of twelve men, the bill having been previously found by a grand jury.

3d. No man shall be considered as an idiot, or a lunatic, unless the fact has been judicially ascertained in open court, and a regular certificate of such fact be produced to the person authorized to receive the votes.

4th. No person to be permitted to exercise his right of voting in more than one primary assembly.

5th. A residence of three months should be deemed necessary to enable any man to vote in his primary assembly.

Q

6th.

6th. But as no man should be deprived of the power of voting, unless, as before observed, he laboured under the misfortune of idiocy or lunacy, or had been convicted of a crime ; so his not having resided three months in that particular parish, wherein he may live at the period of election, shall not extinguish his right of voting altogether ; but he shall be permitted to vote in the parish where last he resided for the space of time abovementioned.

7th. Every man shall be deemed eligible as a deputy either to the secondary assembly or to the convention, unless he be an idiot, lunatic, or one convicted of a crime, by the decisions of a grand and a petty jury.

8th. All persons eligible, may be chosen by the electors of any place, even though he be not a member of that parish or primary assembly.

From this plan the following good effect will ensue ;

First, The people will enjoy not only *civil* liberty, but *political* liberty ; that is to say, they will not only *be* free, but have the power of *keeping* themselves so.

Second,

Second, The deputies being bound to speak the sense of their constituents, will be really their *representatives*. Corruption will be cut up by the roots, as no equivalent can be given to a whole nation for their happiness.

Third, The deputies being liable to be recalled whenever they act contrary to the will of their constituents, a constant sense of their dependence will keep them steady in the pursuit of the object, for the attainment of which they were sent. Impeachment of the public servants, a measure which obstructs public business and creates ill blood, will then be rendered unnecessary, as it has already been found ineffectual ; since it only punishes crimes, but does not prevent them.

Fourth. War, that greatest of human evils, will in all probability cease, as the people, who at all times have borne the burden of carrying it on, will then be consulted on the propriety of making it. The term glory, which is only to be found in the jargon of courts, and not in the language of reason, will be abolished ; and man, awakened at last to a sense of his real in-

terest, will find that the pain of suffering evil is greater than the pleasure of inflicting it.

Fifth. Contentment with our situation, as far as is consistent with the condition of our being, would take place, since no one could with propriety complain of being punished for the breach of that law, to the making of which, he himself had consented.

Sixth. Punishments would be, in great measure rendered unnecessary, as the temptation to commit crimes would be lessened ; and every man would feel a pride in obeying those laws, which he had contributed to enact.

Seventh. Ignorance, the parent of vice, would be soon destroyed ; as all men being trained to public business, would have their understandings enlightened upon the duties which they were bound to perform.

Eighth. The broadest as well as deepest foundation of public happiness would be laid. Every man then not only being eligible by law, but standing an equal chance of filling the offices of the state, the widest field would be opened for  
a dis-



a display of those talents and virtues which produce satisfaction to the individual, and benefit to the country.

And lastly, The poor, who are now worked too hard, and taught too little, would have their persons better protected, their labour better rewarded, and their minds better instructed; and that class of men, the extremely indigent, would soon cease to exist; who, as they are now excluded from the benefits of society, are of course interested, and are too often employed, in promoting its disturbance.

In the appointment of your representatives, I would recommend it to you to choose men like yourselves of plain manners, and simple lives; who can have no other object than the interest of the people, who have never been corrupted by the habits of holding places, or expecting them; and who have neither promoted the views of a domineering aristocracy, nor breathed the contagious air of a court. The history of parties, since the revolution, is only a history of the struggles for power and emolument, and must ultimately convince a deluded nation, that the one is only eager to get, what the other is as anxious to keep.

High

High sounding words about liberty, and pompous and long-winded speeches, if they do not accompany a diminution of public taxes, and an abolition of sinecure places and pensions, are only traps to ensnare. The sacred name of religion has formerly been used as the mantle of persecution. The history of the present day must likewise convince you, that civil polity has its heresies, as well as divinity, and that the altars of freedom, though approached with the sanctimonious pretence of reverence and adoration, may be equally profaned with the temples of religion.—If the opposition, during the last session, had manfully seceded from a parliament, where they only served to display the inefficacy of their efforts, and, had left the minister to run his full career of madness and iniquity, they might have opened the eyes of the people, who would then have seen, that parliament is no check upon the determinations of the cabinet. If, instead of nibbling at particular clauses of acts of parliament, with the loquacious dexterity of barristers, if instead of criminating the minister for a feeble prosecution of the war, they had boldly refused to concur in a vote of supplies, of which the object is to extinguish the liberties of Europe, they would have been justly entitled to the confidence

fidence of their country. Upon this confidence, however, they can have now no claim.† If I perish by the sword of the assassin, is it any alleviation of my sufferings, that the weapon is forged or sharpened by those, who, with hollow professions of friendship in their mouths, embrue their hands in my innocent blood? If any thing can lessen our abhorrence of an action mischievous to society, it can only be our conviction of the sincerity of the agent. But, what shall we think of those, who stigmatize war as murder, yet join with the band of national assassins; who reprobate it as robbery, yet unfeelingly drain the purse of the peasant to support it? What is this, but to be voluntary partakers of the great compact of depravity, and to contribute means to accomplish an end, which they themselves pronounce to be wicked?

Before I conclude, I shall lay before you, the opinion of several members of that branch of the

† From among these, I must however except Sheridan, whose rich and copious talents I admire; whom, for his manly and avowed hatred of the coalition, I revere, and who, unconnected with aristocratic families, and untainted by aristocratic principles, has, I sincerely believe, at heart, the welfare, and therefore merits the confidence of the people.

legisla-

legislature, on the subject of associations, which will not be accused, I apprehend, of being likely to disseminate among the people, the principles of sedition. The name of Camden will be found among them, whose authority as a lawyer is reputed the first in the kingdom, and who is now President of his Majesty's Council. The name of Richmond will be found among them, who is also a Member of the Council, and the name of Nugent Temple, now Marquis of Buckingham, and the cousin of Pitt, will likewise appear among them, who since that period, has enjoyed the viceroyalty of Ireland, the highest post, both as to dignity and emolument, which the power of the crown can confer upon a subject; who possessed, because he, no doubt, was entitled to the confidence of his Sovereign, and who cannot, therefore, be supposed to harbour, in the remotest degree, any principles destructive of the peace of his country.

Dissentient. " We are further impelled to  
 " press this motion, because the object of it has  
 " been seconded and called for by a considerable  
 " majority of the people, who are associating for  
 " this purpose, and seem determined to pursue it,  
 " by every legal and constitutional method that  
 " can



“ can be devised for its success; and however  
 “ some may affect to be alarmed, as if such  
 “ associations tended to disturb the peace, or en-  
 “ croach upon the delegated power of the other  
 “ house, we are persuaded they have no other  
 “ view but to collect the sense of the people, and  
 “ to inform the whole body of the representatives,  
 “ what are the sentiments of the whole body of  
 “ the constituents, in which respect their pro-  
 “ ceedings have been peaceable, orderly, and  
 “ *constitutional*. And if it be asked, what farther  
 “ is to be done, if these petitions are rejected?  
 “ The best answer is, that the case cannot be  
 “ supposed; for although upon a few separate  
 “ petitions it may be fairly said, that the other  
 “ house ought not to be decided by a part only  
 “ of their constituents, yet it cannot be presumed  
 “ they will act in defiance of the united opinion  
 “ of the whole people, or indeed of any great  
 “ and notorious majority. It is admitted they  
 “ have a power to vote as they think fit; but it  
 “ is not possible to conceive that so wise an assem-  
 “ bly will ever be rash enough to reject such  
 “ petitions, and by those means cause this dan-  
 “ gerous question to be broached and agitated,  
 “ **WHETHER THEY HAVE NOT BROKE**  
 “ **THEIR**

"THEIR TRUST?—The voice of the  
"people will certainly be complied with."

Signed, FORTESCUE,  
HARCOURT,  
DE FEVRAS,  
BEAULIEU,  
CAMDEN,  
COVENTRY,  
RICHMOND,  
MANCHESTER,  
DERBY,  
EFFINGHAM,  
GRAFTON,  
PORTLAND,  
FERRERS,  
CHOLMONDELEY,  
KING,  
ABERGAVENNY,  
J. PETERBOROUGH,  
ABINGDON,  
PEMBROKE AND MONTGOMERY,  
FITZWILLIAM,  
RUTLAND,  
NUGENT TEMPLE,  
BOLTON,  
COURTENAY,  
STAM-

STAMFORD,  
TANKERVILLE,  
J. ST. ASAPH,  
WYCOMB,  
CRAVEN,  
ROCKINGHAM,  
SCARBOROUGH,  
JERSEY,  
DEVONSHIRE..

FRIENDS, COUNTRYMEN, AND FELLOW  
CITIZENS!

These truths have I laid before you, with all boldness, simplicity, and zeal. I am one of you, and therefore neither have, nor can have, an interest distinct from yours. If I have held up to you a gloomy picture of your situation, it is no more than the circumstances of the times sufficiently warrant. The remedy is in your own hands, and if you do not apply it, you will have only yourselves to blame for the ruin which must follow. Whatever be the fate of this work, whether it be suffered to moulder in neglect, or expose me to the rage of calumny and persecution, I shall rest my head on this pillow of consolation; that it was the effort of a man whose intentions

were





